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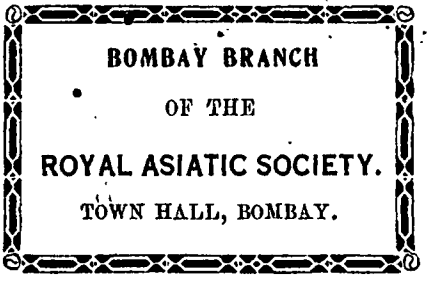

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EUROPE;

OR, A

GENERAL SURVEY

OF

THE PRESENT SITUATION

OF THE

Principal Powers,

WITH

CONJECTURES ON THEIR FUTURE PROSPECTS.

BY

A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES.

LONDON:

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THE following hasty Essay was prepared during the last summer for simultaneous publication in England and the United States; and was finished on the first of September. The reader is requested to refer to that period the statements of facts, a few of which, contained in the chapters on France and Spain, have become, by subsequent occurrences, in a slight degree incorrect.

London,
February 1. 1822.

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EUROPE, &c.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REFLECTIONS.

The course of events in Europe since the final fall of Bonaparte has been as unexpected as it is in every point of view remarkable. A variety of circumstances concurred to produce an uncommon uniformity of feeling and interest among the several nations, and the different classes of society, at the period immediately preceding the Congress of Vienna. The national jealousies, resulting from the ancient balance of power, and the political feuds connected with the earlier periods of the Revolution, had all disappeared under the intolerable tyranny of Napoleon. The continental sovereigns forgot their habitual enmities, and even the distant stateliness of their ordinary habits of intercourse, in this hour of common danger; and acted together with the cordiality and intimacy

of personal friends. Liberty had long before withdrawn from the banners of France, and enlisted under those of her enemies; so that the people entered every where into the views of their governments, with enthusiasm, upon the same principles of independence which sometimes lead them to opposition. France herself, with the exception perhaps of the army, was disposed to regard the allies as deliverers, rather than as enemies. It was an era of good feelings, like that which now exists in the United States; and which it may be hoped will be of longer duration. The uses of adversity were exhibited in the high-minded spirit which directed all the proceedings of the allies among themselves, and in their relation with France at the time of the first invasion. Politicians and sovereigns who had previously submitted with rather an ill grace, if at all, to the common restraints of morality, seemed to have risen, all at once, to the loftiest heights of chivalry; and even cool observers began to indulge a hope, that political affairs would wear in future a new aspect. It seemed, as if the French revolution, after failing, at least for a time, in its direct attempts to accomplish any considerable good, was destined to reform the world by re-action. Certainly any person who, at the time of the treaty of Paris, had predicted that within six years a general dissatisfaction would grow up between the rulers and the people, in almost all the civilised

parts of Europe; that there would be four military revolutions, besides innumerable changes of ministry; and, that discord would even throw her apple into the divine assembly of the Holy Alliance; certainly such a person would have been looked upon, to say the least, as a very bold prophet.

These unexpected events are variously explained by different persons and parties, according as they are led by their position in society, their interests, or their opinions to approve or disapprove them. It is thought by some, and the system has even been countenanced by the public declarations of the three northern powers, that all these violent convulsive movements result from the wild and desperate coalition of a few individuals, leagued together in secret societies; and that by the detection and exemplary punishment of the ring-leaders, the public tranquillity may be immediately and permanently restored. It is also stated, on official authority, that by certain seizures of persons and papers in the north of Italy, a clue has been obtained, by which the secrets of the conspiracy will be unravelled; and if the general idea be correct, it may be presumed that there will soon be no danger of any further revolutions.

But, in reality, it is rather a poor compliment to the stability of thrones and governments to suppose that they can be shaken by the efforts of a few obscure and unprincipled wretches like This-

tlewood and Louvel. In the moral, as in the physical sciences, we must account for effects by supposing causes adequate to their production; and, in good earnest, is it by such a machinery as this that several important kingdoms can be revolutionized, and a general alarm spread through the whole of Europe? The very powers which affect to hold this language, give but slender confirmation of it in their practical measures. Had they been serious in these assertions, should we have seen them holding congress after congress, and putting their troops in motion from Kamschatka to the borders of France? Their language is, in fact, as inconsistent with itself as it is with their proceedings. While they employ at times the contemptuous tone to which I have alluded, they show, on other occasions, that they have a correct perception of the character of the present agitations of Europe; and regard them in their true light, as a continuation of the great revolutionary movement which was checked and compressed for a time by the despotism of Bonaparte, but only waited for his fall to begin its march again with a renewed impulse. This being the real state of the case, as no reasonable man can doubt for a moment; it is quite idle to look for the root of the evil in obscure associations and treasonable plots; or in the desperate fanaticism, which may have led to the assassination of a poet in one country, and a prince in another. These

occurrences are symptoms, slight in importance as to their effect upon the interests at stake, but proving by their atrocity the strength of the principles which are at work; and those persons who are interested in checking the progress of political reformation might think themselves very fortunate if such obscure and feeble enemies were all they had to contend with.

The present agitations must therefore be regarded as resulting from the same general causes that produced the French Revolution. It would be superfluous to investigate these causes here in detail. However individual opinions may vary, as to the effect of particular measures, or accidental circumstances; as to the favorable or unfavorable influence of the prominent political characters of the time on the progress of events; it is now generally admitted, by observing men, that the Revolution had been slowly and gradually brought about by the changes in the state of society, resulting from the progress of industry, wealth, and knowledge; or, in one word, of civilisation. This change in the state of society was the real revolution; and this had been accomplished a long time before the events occurred to which the name is commonly affixed. The violent explosion that followed was little else than the breaking down of antiquated and obsolete forms, from which the spirit had long since departed; and the assumption of their share in the appearances of

power by a portion of society which already possessed it in reality.

The same general state of circumstances which existed in France, was also to be found, with different modifications, in almost all the continental countries. In all, with unimportant exceptions, the existing forms of administration had been established at a period when the land constituted the only property, and when the human cultivators of the soil were intellectually nearly on a level with their brutal fellow-labourers. That the military proprietors, who styled themselves nobles, should, at that time, exercise the whole political power, was a necessary consequence of the existing state of things. It was not quite so natural that the descendants of these individuals should continue to monopolize all the power, at a period, when, in consequence of the rise and progress of industry and wealth, another class of proprietors had grown up in the community, generally more intelligent than the landholders, and certainly as strongly interested in the proper administration of the public affairs. Had the question in dispute, however, been merely who should administer the government; and had the class of military proprietors conducted the administration with impartiality and ability, it may be doubted whether this monopoly of power would have created any considerable discontent. To administer the public affairs, like all other business, is in itself a care

and a labour; and could the mercantile and industrious proprietors have felt a complete certainty that this labour, as far as they were interested in its results, would be performed in the best possible manner, there seems no reason to suppose that they would have felt any strong desire to do it themselves. But, in reality, it is impossible that they could even feel this assurance. In public, as in private affairs, no individual willingly places his property wholly beyond his own control and inspection, whatever confidence he may place in the persons whom he employs. Hence the state of things was in itself unnatural; but independently of this, the mercantile and industrious classes had reason to be satisfied, long before they were important enough to be able to make themselves heard in society, that they should be compelled to endure not only the necessary inconveniences of this political situation, but all the multiplied and aggravated mischiefs that could possibly be made to flow from it by the most wanton abuse of power. That they were excluded from the administration of government was a slight grievance. The evil became of more importance, when governments, instead of consulting and promoting their interest, attempted to crush and oppress them by every description of imposition and prohibition that could be imagined. Indifference itself must have given way to indignation at the revolting in-

justice displayed by the landed proprietors, in exempting themselves, by their own act, from the taxes which they imposed upon the rest of the community. Not content with these arrogant and odious assumptions, they pushed their pretensions still farther; and claimed, under the name of nobility, an intrinsic and essential superiority of blood and race over their industrious fellow-citizens. To live in idleness was to live nobly; and it was a disgrace and degradation to exercise any description of manual or intellectual labour: and it may be remarked as a proof how strongly the most unjust and absurd opinions fasten themselves upon society, by the force of habit, that this prejudice still prevails as strongly as ever in the higher classes of society.

Such a state of things necessarily established a hostile relation between the industrious classes of the community and the landed proprietors; the result of which was of course determined by the progress of events. Had the impulse which gave a spring to commerce and industry, been less powerful and active than it was, they must have sunk under the load of so much oppression and contumely; and Europe would now have been grovelling in the barbarism of the earliest feudal times: or more probably, would have fallen still lower in the scale of degradation; and, instead of being, as it is, the light and glory of the world, would have exhibited the sad spectacle of decay and misery

that we see in Turkey, Persia, and Morocco. Happily the spirit of improvement was too powerful to be checked; and supposing it, as it has proved to be, sufficiently active to give the industrious classes a constantly augmenting importance in the community, notwithstanding every thing that was done to oppress and insult them, it is evident that the privileged proprietors must have ultimately receded of themselves, from their odious pretensions; or that a period would arrive, sooner or later, under any circumstances, when the two interests would come into collision. Wealth and knowledge are the ingredients of essential power. When the intelligence and wealth of the industrious classes had risen to an equality with those of the landed proprietors or privileged orders, they would be in substance equally powerful; and it is not in human nature that they should then submit to the degradation and oppression which they had been obliged to endure, when they were a small and insignificant portion of the community. Supposing them even, from the force of habit, to continue to submit to it, at this epoch, a period would soon arrive, in the progress of their increasing influence, when their wealth and intelligence would be far superior to those of the nobles, as they now are, in fact, in the civilised parts of Europe. Their final emancipation, and the struggle necessary to effect it, must therefore be regarded as

necessary and inevitable occurrences in the course of events.

Hence the collision of interests of which so many symptoms have appeared in Europe for the last two or three centuries; which, if it did not actually cause the Reformation, gave it most of its political importance; which burst out with such a tremendous explosion in the French Revolution, and is now agitating and convulsing, in greater or less degrees, every part of Christendom, except Russia and the United States, which from precisely opposite causes are entirely exempt from its influence — this collision of interests is not an obscure conspiracy, or an accidental disorder in the political world, but a necessary result of the operation of general principles. The popular cause, the cause of constitutional liberty, is essentially just; and the parties who will finally be the only sufferers from the conflict, are also ultimately responsible for its occurrence; because it was their duty to foresee it, and to guard against it, by accommodating, of their own accord, the forms of administration to the changes in the state of society.

The sovereigns now tell us, it is true, that they are responsible to God, and not to man, for the discharge of their duty. This the people know; and this is one reason, among others, why they wish to change the existing political forms, and to be governed by rulers who shall also be responsible to

man. But they also know that if the sovereigns are responsible to God for the discharge of their duty, the people are also responsible to God for the performance of theirs; and that it is a part of this duty to protect their persons and rights from violation, whether by brute force, or under the forms of law. The late attempts of the northern alliance, to make out a case in their favour by introducing this doctrine of the divine right of kings, in its antiquated and exploded shape, is perhaps one of the strongest proofs they have given of their utter incompetence to the task they impose upon themselves, of regulating the interests of the civilised world, and of the absolute necessity of the political reformation they are opposing. Improvements in government, they continually urge, should be the work of the rulers themselves. In this way they are effected without convulsion or danger; while, if they are forced upon the rulers from other quarters, however useful in themselves, they are always attended with a greater or less degree of immediate positive evil. This doctrine is admirable; and the people ask for nothing better than that their rulers would attend to it, and introduce of their own accord the necessary changes. But suppose that the sovereigns, while they publicly admit in all their declarations that the duty of introducing the necessary improvements belongs to them, forget to perform it in practice, and sanction the existence of the most intolerable

abuses, must the nation leave the work undone, because the sovereigns might do it better if they would consent to undertake it? What if the sovereign himself happens to be strongly interested in the existing abuse? Is there no appeal for millions of suffering men against the arbitrary and capricious or interested decision of a single person, his minister, or his mistress? These are the doctrines of eastern despotism; and it is honourable to the two most enlightened governments in Europe that they have withdrawn their countenance from an association that avows such extraordinary principles.

In applying strong expressions to the policy adopted by these monarchs, I would not be understood as intending to impute to them, or even to their advisers, a proportionate degree of personal blame; although it is difficult to consider them as wholly innocent, since we must suppose that individuals, however much their opinions and feelings are of necessity under the operation of circumstances, may still, with honest intentions and sufficient enquiry, especially in matters wholly practical like these, make a nearer approach to the truth. Still their views must, generally speaking, be in a great measure the result of their personal position, which on the other hand is itself the result of the political situation of the countries they respectively govern. They are the rulers of empires in the lowest state of civilisation. Such empires sup-

pose, of necessity, an arbitrary form of government; and if the sovereigns who are called to rule over them are naturally imbued by their position with arbitrary principles and feelings, the circumstance is not productive of injury while they confine themselves to the administration of their own dominions. That a despot should hold to the doctrine of despotism is certainly natural; and that slaves must be ruled with a rod of iron, may perhaps be admitted. The misfortune is that these powerful despots are placed by circumstances in such a situation that they have the opportunity of introducing their arbitrary notions, salutary enough perhaps in their effect upon their own barbarous subjects at home, into the concerns of other countries in different states of civilisation, and which ought to be governed upon other principles.

Although it is clearly the interest, as well as the duty, of the privileged classes in Europe, upon a large and correct view of their position, to accommodate the existing forms of government, by their own voluntary act, to the altered state of society; still, as immediate interest generally predominates in determining human actions, such sacrifices could not have been anticipated as probable. Hence the period when the wealth and importance of the industrious classes should have risen to such a height as to give them reasonable hopes of success in an open conflict with the privileged orders, was naturally to be looked to as the *age of revolutions*;

and this is the period in which we live. The approach of it was not sudden and unexpected. It did not burst upon the world in thunder without affording time for preparation to meet the shock. Those who have suffered, and are still to suffer by it, had sufficient warning; and if the understandings of the governments had been on a level with the intelligence of the age, they had ample leisure and opportunity to take all the necessary precautions for preventing the impending danger. Through the whole of the last century there prevailed among the reflecting men in France, not a vague conjecture, but a settled conviction which may be now found repeatedly expressed in a thousand passages of their writings, that the existing institutions could not stand. Rousseau applies the remark to the thrones of Europe in general, and every day's experience bears witness to his sagacity. The present age, therefore, will be recorded in history as one of the most remarkable epochs in the progress of society; and it may be hoped, will be productive of the most important and beneficial results. It is an age distinguished for great personal talent and activity; for daring enterprises, sometimes defeated, but often successful; for a prodigious developement of every description of power, intellectual, physical, and moral. It is also, of necessity, an age of confusion and disorder, of violence, and, I may add, of much positive guilt. The virtues, if they exist at

all, must exist as habitual traits of character; and an age of great commotion is not favourable to the preservation of permanent habits of any kind, in the individuals who are placed by character or circumstances within the sphere of its influence. The Christian world, I may say the globe itself, for the movement seems to be extending very rapidly beyond the bounds of Christendom, is rocked to its centre by a great convulsion. Empires that bore the name of colonies have shaken, or are now shaking off the shackles of dependance. In America alone, eight or ten powerful nations are bursting at once into new forms of existence. In the old world reformation and transformation are every where the watch-words; and the bayonet, the universal instrument for obtaining new advantages or securing the old. There never was a period in history when Europe exhibited any thing like the array of military and naval force which has been habitually on foot for the last thirty years. The wars of the Reformation shrink into skirmishes by the side of these Titanian campaigns. Even the multitudinous and tumultuary hosts of the crusaders are of small account, when we see a single monarch maintaining a peace-establishment of more than eight hundred thousand disciplined troops. In such times energy, rather than moral virtue, is the dominant quality. The wise and good are slow to engage in these violent enterprises, always hoping that the expected advantage

may be obtained at less cost from the gentler operation of time. They look with distrust and apprehension upon revolutions, however just the principles, and however probable the ultimate benefit. While they are waiting, the ardent and ambitious rush forward, and commence the work: and if cooler and more thoughtful spirits lend some assistance at first, they are soon thrown out in the race; and the effort for improvement degenerates into a conflict of personal interests and passions. In this desperate struggle, the peaceful pursuits of the people are interrupted; the purest blood flows in torrents, and the happiness of one or two generations is almost wholly sacrificed. Such is but too often the general aspect of a revolution. I mention it, because in expressing a favourable opinion of the principles and probable results of the present efforts for political reform, I would not be understood to approve of revolutions in general, or in particular of all the late movements in various quarters that pass under this name, in their details. The best friends of liberty have always looked with distrust on revolutions; though sometimes compelled to resort to them as a refuge from still greater evils. *The happiest revolution*, says Rousseau, *would be dearly purchased by the blood of a single individual*; an exaggerated expression of a just and humane idea. It is a rare occurrence, indeed, and can only happen by a most singular blessing of providence,

when, as in our revolution, the wisest and the best men in the nation take the lead from the beginning, and retain it steadily through the whole. The people who had the good sense and the virtue to submit to such authority, in times when established forms and accustomed restraints had lost their influence, proved themselves to be worthy of independence. And it is not the least advantage of the happy institutions which they have bequeathed to us, that political reforms may be introduced, whenever they appear expedient, without even the apprehension of violence.

Without dwelling any longer on these general principles, which at this day would probably present but little novelty, were there even opportunity here for the discussion; I shall confine myself to a few deductions from them in regard to the present state of Europe in general, and shall then proceed to offer some more particular remarks upon the situation of the most important members composing this great political body.

Admitting then, what it has not been my object to prove, but merely to state, that the spirit of political improvement now at work throughout the world is the necessary and natural result of the progress of civilization, that is of industry, wealth, and knowledge, it is easy to calculate with sufficient probability the respective strength of the interests which it brings into collision, and which

we see in various countries engaged in one form or another in actual conflict. The points at issue between the parties to these struggles, are treated very often as matters of opinion and abstract right. For the present purpose, I lay these considerations entirely out of the case, although in the course of my remarks I may perhaps have occasion to touch slightly upon some of the controverted questions. I lay them out of the case, not only because opinions of all parties are in general determined by their interests, but because, whether they are right or wrong, it is not in the character of their opinions that the strength or weakness of their cause is to be found. We may venture to hope, perhaps, that at one time or another, in this world or the next, the right side will always be the strongest. At present this is not uniformly the case; and, in order to judge of the strength of a party or opinion, it is necessary to ascertain, not whether it is right or wrong, but what amount of interest is connected with it, and what opposed to it; how large and important a portion of society finds advantage respectively in promoting or defeating its general objects.

Now, it may be taken for granted, as a clear proposition, that the whole body of society is interested in the progress of civilization. The happiness of all classes is alike promoted by the augmentation of industry, in its several branches of

agriculture, commerce, and manufactures; by the additional comforts and enjoyments which it distributes through the community in various proportions, but in greater or less degrees to all; and by the progress of knowledge, which, however at times misapplied, always tends, in its general results, to the public good. Admitting, then, that political improvement is one of the objects to be effected in the progress of civilization, the interest promoted by it is the interest of the whole society; and the property and intelligence of the society at large, are consequently, on a general view of the subject, enlisted every where in its support.

Who then is opposed to it? What interest sustains the opposite party in these difficult and disastrous struggles? The answer is familiar. The interest in question is the interest connected with such existing institutions as are injurious to the general good, and would be destroyed by the progress of political improvement. Those who derive personal advantages from these institutions, naturally oppose every thing, however generally beneficial, which tends to overthrow them, on the same principles which led the worthy silver-smiths of Ephesus, in ancient times, to resist the progress of Christianity. They had not enquired into its evidences, or reflected much upon its general influence: they only knew that it would ruin the craft by which they had their wealth. If, then, we

regard the whole of Europe as forming one body politic, divided into parties in regard to the great question of political reformation now so violently agitated, there will be found on one side the whole mass of population, not interested in the support of existing institutions injurious to the public welfare; and, on the other, the individuals deriving personal benefit from these institutions, with all that part of the population which is under their influence.

Such are the present circumstances of Europe, that the forces enlisted on opposite sides by these contending interests are nearly balanced; and they are separated pretty exactly by a geographical line. In all the western part of Europe, civilization and political improvement, in its train, have already made such progress, that they have in a great measure broken down, in substance, if not in form, all injurious political institutions; and here there is really no interest of any consequence engaged in support of such establishments, or opposed to the cause of liberal principles and good government. The eastern part of Europe, on the contrary, is yet in a great measure uncivilized. Russia, the dominant power in that quarter, as a nation, is wholly so. There, the existing institutions are all the growth of barbarous times, accommodated to barbarous manners, and wholly at variance with the habits and feelings of civilized

nations. Still, a certain portion of the society derives a vast individual importance from their existence, and would probably oppose with vigor any attempt to overthrow them. Independently of which, the nations themselves are not yet sufficiently improved to meditate such attempts, or to wish for change. But though at present entirely safe from any attack at home, the rulers naturally look with jealousy upon the progress of different principles in other contiguous countries. When they see a spirit adverse to their importance, passing like an electric shock from nation to nation, they begin to apprehend with reason, that, if not checked in time, it will soon penetrate into their own quarters, and attack the foundation of their power and wealth. It is therefore, on general principles, a natural and necessary, though an unfortunate result of their position, that they employ their influence, and even their arms, to prevent in foreign countries the most salutary and useful innovations. And in these enterprises, they carry with them the whole weight of the communities they respectively govern, which, in their present state of civilization, are nothing more than blind instruments in the hands of their rulers. They also find assistance abroad, in all that portion of society in the west of Europe which is connected with the mouldering remnants of abuses which have been destroyed in substance; in that part which has personally suf-

fered by political improvements, and still retains a lingering hope that the ancient state of things will be completely restored. Along the geographical line which divides these adverse interests, lies the debateable ground where at present they come to open physical collision. In the whole of Italy, and in the western part of Germany, civilization has risen to as high a point as in any part of Europe; but the eastern despots avail themselves of their proximity, and of the circumstances which now neutralize in a great measure the active power of the western nations, to maintain the ascendancy of antiquated forms and establishments inconsistent with civilization, by their great influence, and, when occasion requires, at the point of the bayonet, as we have seen in Sardinia and Naples.

I have observed, that these two great European parties were at the present moment in respect of power pretty nearly balanced. In fact, their population, numerically computed, is not very unequal; and if the western nations are infinitely more wealthy, the eastern are in proportion more warlike, and are also more completely at the disposition of their rulers. It may be feared, that, upon the whole, the preponderance of power, in the present state of circumstances, is against the cause of improvement. The western and civilized nations are exhausted and impoverished by their late protracted struggle, torn by parties, disunited among themselves, or acting together like cold and heart-

less allies, and apparently almost insensible of the common bond of interest that unites them all. On the other hand, the eastern despots have come out of the war with augmented, rather than diminished, strength. Their armies are the best disciplined and most numerous in Europe; their subjects are tranquil, and their own political union complete and cordial. If they had but the command of more abundant financial resources, there is nothing to prevent them from sweeping the continent unresisted, from Hamburgh to Cadiz, as they have swept it already from the Tyrol to Calabria. A want of credit is their weak point, and in the nature of things must remain so, because wealth and credit suppose a higher state of civilization than the nations they rule over have attained, or than is compatible with the institutions on which their power is founded.

From the remarks which have been here made respecting the character and respective forces of the parties now contending in Europe, may be deduced a number of general conclusions in regard to the progress and ultimate result of the struggle, which would also admit of an extensive developement. I shall be obliged to content myself with a simple statement of some of the most important.

1. As the cause of political improvement is identical with that of civilization and general prosperity, every measure that has a tendency to produce these effects, whatever may be the views

with which it is taken, tends also to the promotion of liberal institutions. Thus, if the Emperor of Austria, at the same moment that he is crushing the constitutional party in Naples and Sardinia, is encouraging the cultivation of the vine in Hungary or the commerce of Trieste, he is promoting indirectly by one set of measures the progress of the very principles and institutions which he is endeavouring to check by another. The Russian government carefully prohibit the entry of French pamphlets and newspapers, but admit very readily the introduction of the works of their standard writers, and the exquisite products of their skill in the arts. And yet a tragedy of Racine, or a case of Champaigne, is a stronger argument in favour of liberal ideas, than any to be found in the *Minerve* or the *Constitutionel*.

Again, and this remark is the converse of the former, no effectual measures can be taken to oppose the progress of liberal ideas, except such as strike at the root of the general prosperity of a country in all its branches. To prohibit or discourage agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, is the only certain way of checking political improvement. Now, such measures are not only too odious to be resorted to, but are directly contrary to the immediate interest of the sovereigns themselves, who derive, for a time, a great increase of importance from the growing wealth and prosperity of their subjects. Hence, civilization will

of necessity continue to follow its natural course, and will bring with it such changes in the forms of social institutions as it is fitted to produce.

It may be added, that even the violent measures taken by the sovereigns to check the progress of constitutional principles, the late invasion of Italy, indeed the whole series of wars directed against the principles of the French revolution or its abuses, while they temporarily crushed or checked these principles in one form, have added in another an immense accession to their actual strength. I allude here to the effect which these wars have produced upon the finances of all the great powers, in the vast creation of public debt, which is certainly one of the most remarkable phenomena of modern times. Now this prodigious creation of artificial capital operates to a very great extent, if not to its full nominal amount, as a transfer or cession of property, from the landed proprietors to the industrious and mercantile classes. These loans are realized in the form of rents, and are ultimately a charge upon the land, and its owners, while in the hands of the capitalists the securities that represent them are equivalent to money. Thus the Emperor of Austria, to defray the expences of his late attack upon the principles of liberty in Italy, has borrowed, at high interest, a large sum of our countryman, Mr. David Parish, and certain associates. What is the effect of this operation? It throws the weight of an amount of property

equal to the loan into the scale of the general mercantile interest of Europe and the world, which, as I have taken for granted, is essentially and necessarily that of civilization and political improvement; and it charges the expences of keeping this capital in existence upon the landed proprietors of the Austrian empire. Thus, if the injury done to the cause of liberty by this invasion, is estimated in money at the amount expended in effecting it, the injury done to the cause of despotism is precisely twice as great, because an equal sum is taken from its adherents and given to its adversaries. The only off-set to these great advantages is, that the sovereigns occasionally take the liberty of declaring themselves bankrupt, by which operation a part of the new capital is annihilated. If the whole amount of property now existing in Europe in the form of public debt, were compared with the amount of property of all other kinds estimated at its actual value in money, it would probably be found that the former is not much inferior to the latter. It may be looked upon as a mass of property created at the expence of existing establishments in favour of the cause of political improvement, and furnishes one of the most singular instances, perhaps, that could be produced, of an effect "counter-working its cause."

It may be remarked, finally, that the ultimate issue of the present struggle will depend upon the

future progress of civilization. If civilization, instead of advancing any further, should decline from its present state, and go to decay in the countries where it has now attained the greatest height, the advance of liberal political principles will stop with it; and, instead of spreading into other parts of Europe where they have not yet penetrated, their influence will gradually disappear from the regions which they now, in greater or less degrees, enlighten. If, on the contrary, as every thing seems to indicate, commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, though perhaps labouring at this moment under a temporary depression, are likely for a long and indefinite future period, to advance, by regularly and rapidly increasing steps, in consequence of the great increase of population, which must necessarily take place in the European settlements all over the globe, and the consequent great augmentation of demand for the products of labour in all its forms; then it may be safely asserted, that the cause of good government and liberty is also in an advancing state, that it will continue to gain ground in those parts of Europe and the world, where its triumph is yet only partial; and will even gradually penetrate into regions, whose population is now unanimously arrayed against it, or is too barbarous even to form an idea of the existence of such a blessing.

Having thus exhibited the point of view under

which the general affairs of Europe present themselves to my mind, I shall now consider a little more in detail, the situation of the principal powers; beginning with France, which has long been the central point of European politics.

CHAP. II.

FRANCE.

The situation of France is, perhaps, more satisfactory, at present, than that of any other European power, whether we consider the advantages which it actually enjoys, or its favourable prospects for the future. If any thing could afford compensation for the crimes and horrors of which that nation has been the theatre for the last thirty years, it would be this fortunate and beneficial result. In the midst of these excesses, the principles of liberty which were brought into action at the commencement of the revolution, have been gradually and slowly working out their effects; and these are now manifested in a highly improved state of the public and private economy of this great people. Doubtless there are still some clouds hanging over the future. New convulsions of a certain extent and importance may, by possibility, occur; but under any circumstances, the substantial advantages now enjoyed in France seem to be secure. I shall class the remarks I have to offer upon this subject under the heads of the state of private property; the forms of administration; the cha-

racter of public opinion; and the policy of the cabinet.

It may appear singular that the finances should not be reckoned one of the principal objects of consideration, since this is almost the only point of importance with some of the great European powers. But the French finances are, at present, in so flourishing and well settled a state, as to leave but little room for observation in a political point of view. The debt is small compared with the population and resources of the country, and in a rapid course of extinction. Taxes, to the full amount of the annual expenditure, are collected without difficulty, and, though high, are apparently not excessively burdensome; and the ominous cry of *deficit* is not heard within the walls of the French parliament: no other in the old world, or (I am sorry to add) the new, can make the same boast. This point alone, if there were no other, would give to France a very decided and important advantage, in respect of political situation, over the other European powers. Without dwelling upon this head, I proceed, therefore, to consider the state of private property, which has undergone great alterations and improvements during the late convulsions.

The laws which give security to private property and regulate the distribution of it, are, perhaps, the most important features in the political institutions of every country; although generally looked

upon as of less consequence than those which determine the forms of legislation and administration. Property is, in fact, the principal element of political power. Hence the laws which regulate the distribution of it, regulate at the same time the distribution of power; and consequently determine, in substance, the character of the government, whatever may be its outward forms. Property is also the means by which individuals procure the advantages which social institutions were intended to secure, as the comforts and enjoyments of life, education, virtuous dispositions, and general happiness. The laws which regulate the distribution of property, determine, therefore, in a great degree, the manner in which these blessings shall be distributed through the community. It may seem, at first view, paradoxical to assert that virtuous dispositions can be obtained through the medium of property; or, in a shorter phrase, can be bought for money. Pope, indeed, tells us explicitly, "that esteem and love, the natural results and attendants of virtue, were never to be sold;" and the remark is true in the sense in which it was intended to be understood. It is equally true, however, that moral depravity is, generally speaking, the necessary attendant of extreme and abject wretchedness: and that the best method of securing the general prevalence of virtuous habits through all classes of the community, is to place within the reach of the greatest possible number of persons the means of

obtaining honestly a share in the comforts of life. This is done by regulating the distribution of property in the way best fitted to effect that object. Hence the great importance of the laws relating to this subject, which have hitherto been too little regarded by professed politicians, theoretical and practical.

Before the revolution, the land in France, as in most other parts of Europe, was held in large estates, which descended according to the principles of the feudal law, to the eldest son. The peasantry had no property in the soil. They were the subjects of their superiors, and in every respect in an abject and miserable state. It is well known, that, by some of the first measures of the national assembly, the feudal principles of succession were abolished, and provision made for the equal distribution of estates among all the children, male and female; the owner not having the liberty of disposing of his property even by will, except under great restrictions. These new regulations have been ever since and are still in regular operation, with a few exceptions in favour of the peers of France, and some other high dignitaries, who are allowed to establish entails to a certain extent. The operation of these laws upon private property was greatly accelerated by the confiscation and sale of the estates of the emigrants and clergy; and in the general result, the peasants have been converted almost universally from dependant and

wretched labourers into independent proprietors. It appears, from authentic and official calculations, that more than one half of the heads of families in France already belong to this class. The effect of such a change upon the industry, the moral habits, the happiness of the great mass of population, is sufficiently obvious. This division of property is the great and essential advantage which the French nation has derived from the revolution. By this measure, they have realized the substantial possession of independence and freedom: and it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for any human power to impose upon them permanently hereafter either the reality or the forms of tyranny.

The immediate result of this division upon the state of property and of society is generally admitted to be good. It is allowed by all, that estates were too large before the revolution; and that great public benefit would result from a division and subdivision of them for one or two generations. With regard to the ultimate effects of the new system, if continued in operation for an indefinite length of time, there is a difference of opinion. The party in France which assumes the name of royalists, consider it as too democratic to be compatible with a monarchical government; and propositions tending to a modification of it have already been made in the house of peers; although nothing has yet been done, or probably will be, at present. Some of the most enlightened English

politicians, as Mr. Malthus, have also expressed an unfavourable opinion of it, for reasons of an opposite character. They regard it as adverse to liberty; and likewise as inconsistent with the best possible improvement of the soil. The Edinburgh Reviewers appear to doubt its advantages very strongly; and, indeed, I have found but few intelligent persons who expressed a decided approbation of it, either in writing or conversation. It is not unnatural, however, even supposing the system to be as valuable as it is thought by those who approve it, that it should be looked upon for a while with great suspicion; considering how bold and essential an innovation it is upon a state of property still existing in every part of Europe, except France, and the contiguous countries which made a part of the French empire. Without entering into a full discussion of the theory of this important subject, I shall add a few suggestions, tending to show that the objections to the new system are not, perhaps, to be regarded as conclusive.

In order to form a correct opinion of the merits of this system, the first thing necessary is to ascertain with certainty its actual results in fact; and upon this point, which is the essential one, the ideas of those who are opposed to it appear to me to be incorrect. How far will the division of the land proceed by the continual operation of this system? Its adversaries affect to fear that it will

go the full length of the infinite divisibility of matter; that a whole kingdom will be cut up at no remote period into inch pieces; and that all the estates in it will be literally no bigger than the one described by Juvenal, of the size of a lizard, (*unius lacertæ*) which has given commentators so much anxiety. We see nothing of this, however, in those parts of the United States where the same law has been long in operation, and upon a very limited territory; as Massachusetts. The real extent to which this division would proceed, would probably be determined by the state of the population. For this purpose the cultivators may be considered as the whole community. If there were no increase of population, this system would create no division of estates; each family producing a son and a daughter, the estates which were divided into equal portions between the children, would be united again by marriage, and remain precisely as they were before. But the tendency of the system is to increase population, as long as a country is capable of supporting it, and with the increase of population, estates would be subdivided, until they were reduced to the size just sufficient to support an industrious family. Here the subdivision would generally stop. If a property just sufficient to support a single family, descended to several heirs, instead of cutting it up among themselves into inch pieces, they would sell it, and divide the proceeds. A different course might be

pursued occasionally by improvident individuals, who are found in all classes; and cultivators would sometimes marry, as we see persons in other occupations, without any reasonable prospect of being able to support a family. At this point, the check of disease and poverty would present itself, as it does now, and prevent the possibility of any further subdivision. But, in general, the division would stop at the point I have mentioned, because this is the one defined by immediate self interest, the general rule of action, which, in all theoretical reasoning, must be taken as the universal one.

Again: The writers I have alluded to, appear to think that this principle would produce a universal equality in the size of all estates. No individual would possess more wealth or influence than the rest: and, independently of the unfavourable effect that this state of things might have upon the higher and more liberal pursuits which form the grace and ornament of social life, and which could hardly be cultivated in straitened circumstances, it is thought to be incompatible with political independence. It would lead directly, says Malthus, to military despotism. Whatever might, in fact, be the result of such an equality, the existence of it seems to be wholly chimerical. It is true, that the land would then be thrown into the common market, with every other description of property, and placed at the command of skill and industry.

But there is no more reason why this should produce an exact equality of property among the cultivators, than that the present state of things in Europe should produce such an equality among the persons engaged in commerce or manufactures, where we know that the inequalities are still greater, than in land. It may be shown, indeed, by mathematical demonstration, that when every description of property is entirely unfettered by artificial institutions, there will exist, of necessity, the greatest variety in the amount of individual estates, that is possible in the nature of things. Suppose for example, that a hundred persons are playing at a game of skill for a sum of a hundred thousand dollars, and that their skill is respectively in the ratio of the ascending series of numbers, from one to a hundred; their shares in the sum at stake, at the close of the game, will be in the same proportion, and will stand in relation to each other, as 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. to 100: and this is the greatest possible variety which can be effected by the division of this sum among a hundred persons. This is the image of a society, where the whole of the common property is thrown into a general stock, from which each individual member draws his share, according to his talents and industry. As the varieties of these are infinite, the variety of fortunes will be infinite likewise. But in the case we are supposing, if two or three large sums, say of ten thousand dollars each, are taken

from the common stock, and given gratuitously to two or three of the players, the possible variety will be diminished, instead of being augmented. If the persons thus favoured, happen to be the best players, their shares at the close may be larger than any that would have existed on the former supposition; but on the whole, the variety of shares must be less considerable, because the causes that produce it operate within a narrower compass.

Thus it appears that the practical operation of this system is to increase the population, as long as the country is capable of supporting it, and to distribute the whole property of the community among its members, on the principle of the greatest possible variety of fortunes: the smallest estates being in general large enough to support an industrious family. It can hardly be denied that such a state of property is preferable to the one resulting from feudal principles: nor does it seem to be attended with the inconveniences which have been apprehended. If we suppose with Malthus, that the subdivision of the whole country into very small estates, tends to introduce military despotism; then this system is more adverse to it, than any other that can be imagined, because it leads, as we have seen, to the greatest possible variety of fortunes. In France, says the Edinburgh Review, there can be no landed aristocracy, to fill the provincial magistracies with

respectability and advantage to the country. It is true, that there are not at present, and probably never will be, any landholders with annual incomes of 100 and 150,000l. sterling, as in England: and the absence of them is hardly an evil. That there will be a want of magistrates or of lawyers, is, I am afraid, the last thing to be apprehended in France or any other civilised community. Nor does the apprehension appear to be very remarkably justified by a statement in another passage in the same article, that there are 5600 judges in France, to do the business which is done in England by 21. The natural aristocracy of a country, says the Review with justice, cannot be created by laws. How then can it be created by the law of entails? The natural aristocracy is that of talents, wealth, and virtue. This will always exist in the most flourishing state where there is the widest field, and the amplest reward for the exercise of talent and virtue; and it is not favoured by artificial fetters on the circulation of property. If there be in reality in England, a more respectable class of middling proprietors than in France, which may be doubted, it is not owing to the law of entails; but to the circumstance, that England is, at the present moment, a richer country than France in proportion to its population, and as the new system in France will produce a great increase of wealth, it will tend more than any thing else to supply this deficiency.

Indeed the difference of situation between England and France, in regard to the principle of distributing property, does not appear sufficient to produce any great practical difference of circumstances; since it seems, from the calculations of Colquhoun, that the amount of property, of which the circulation is not perfectly free, does not much exceed a tenth part of the whole.

How far this system is compatible with a monarchical form of government, is a different question. In this particular, the apprehensions of the French royalists may not be wholly groundless. A country without artificial inequalities in the distribution of property and personal privileges, is substantially republican. Experience alone can determine, whether, under such circumstances, the form of monarchy can be preserved. In China this combination appears to have existed for upwards of three millenniums: and it is therefore not essentially impossible. It may be doubted, whether it will ever be in the power of the stirring spirits of the European world, to produce an example of the same kind at home. And whatever the French royalists may think of it, whose personal interest is at stake, the disappearance of the forms of monarchy in a country from which the substance has long since departed, would be a matter of very little importance to the nation or the world at large. As to the gratuitous remarks of Malthus and the Edinburgh reviewers, that a

military despotism would follow of course upon the heels of the republic, it is in both a mere assertion, without any attempt at proof, and as we have seen, proceeds upon false suppositions in regard to the state of property. The same prediction has been liberally extended to our own republic by most of the European politicians: but after an experience of nearly half a century, we do not find its accomplishment at all more probable than at the first moment.

I conclude then, that the new state of property which has been brought about by the revolution, is a great and essential improvement in the situation of France. In this advantage, and in the flourishing state of the public finances, consists principally the superiority of her present position over that of the other European powers. In other respects, such as the forms of administration, the state of public opinion, and the policy of the cabinet, neither the present aspect of her affairs, nor her immediate future prospects, are very flattering.

1. The forms of administration are still in a great measure unsettled, although the seventh year of the new reign has elapsed. I speak not so much of the degree of stability which may be attributed to the reigning dynasty; but rather of the composition of the legislative body, which, in a representative government, is a matter of much more importance. To invent new systems of

election, and to alter them before they have had time to be fairly tried, has been the principal employment of the French government since the restoration. It must be added, to the credit of the representation of the people, which is often supposed to be the turbulent and revolutionary element in political systems, that the disposition to change has not been exhibited in this department, but in that of the executive power; and that the successive modifications of the right of suffrage have been, as it were, forced upon the parliament by the ministry. While in England, the reformers were trampled under foot by dragoons, and hunted down under the name of *Radicals*, as something rather worse than wild beasts; while the aristocratic party, in most parts of the continent, were declaiming with bitterness against any thing in the shape of change; at the same moment, this party were insisting in France upon a radical reform in the popular representation, as the only means of saving the country, and actually carried it through at the point of the bayonet. And the reason of this apparent inconsistency was plain enough. In France, the aristocratic party expected to gain by reform. In all the rest of Europe, they were sure to lose by it. Such was the secret of this, as it is of many other very conscientious differences of opinion.

The principles of representative government are not yet quite so well settled, or so generally

understood, as they probably will be some centuries hence. The institution is still recent. It has been put in practice till very lately, in only two or three countries, and from this small number of instances, and comparatively short trial, it would be unsafe to draw, with perfect confidence, any general conclusions. It is highly probable, however, that property exercises its natural influence in this, as in other governments; and that this influence is not much affected by the particular forms under which the representative system presents itself. If the right of suffrage is restricted, it naturally falls into the hands of the proprietors, as the prominent members of the community. If extended, it is still exercised by persons under their influence, and of course in their interest. Hence, the true secret, and only effectual way of giving a popular character to a political system, is not to extend the right of suffrage, but to distribute the property as equally as possible through the community.

In France, as we have seen, this object had already been effected to a great extent. Almost the whole mass of property had been newly divided and distributed; and the proprietors, generally speaking, might be said to hold of the revolution, as they were all said, under the feudal system, to hold of the king. Their interest was, of course, identified with the order of things produced by the revolution; their opinions were in

accordance with its principles; and these opinions would have probably been manifested by almost any system of suffrage that could have been introduced. They pervaded the mass of the people, from the highest to the lowest ranks, and the whole nation might be said, in this sense, to be completely revolutionary. Hence, had the king, upon his return, placed himself frankly and honestly at the head of this new order of interests, opinions, and feelings, there must have been a perfect harmony between the representatives of the nation and the government, which would have existed alike under any system of elections; so that the laws upon this subject would have been of slight importance, and would probably have engaged but little attention.

Circumstances prevented the government from adopting this course of policy. They appeared, on the contrary, to look with suspicion on every thing connected with the interests and opinions of the revolution; and evidently gave their confidence to the adherents of the ancient system, although some formal concessions, and many fair promises were made to the friends of the new. It was natural to suppose that the popular interest, alarmed at this state of things, would express itself at the elections with redoubled energy; and hence, as it was found necessary to gratify the nation with the form of a representative government, the difficult problem presented itself, to in-

vent a system of popular representation, in which the people should not be represented. The solution of this problem has occupied almost the whole time and attention of the government, since the restoration; and to do them justice, they appear to have succeeded, at least for the moment, better than could have been reasonably expected.

The opinion seems to have been early adopted, that the great proprietors would be less favorable to the popular cause, than the smaller; and, accordingly, the charter itself, which was published in 1814, at the time of the first restoration, restricted the right of voting in the election of deputies, to persons paying three hundred franks annual taxes; leaving most of the other details to be determined by law. Meanwhile, until this law should be passed, the legislative body, as it existed under Bonaparte, was preserved. No law, however, was passed upon the subject, before his return from Elba, when the house of deputies was dissolved, and a new one chosen; which was again dissolved at the king's second restoration; and, there being still no new law to regulate the elections, recourse was had to the old imperial system for this purpose. Under this system, the deputies were in substance nominated by the government; and the result was the house of 1815, denominated by the king, *introuvable*, (undiscoverable,) probably in derision; as he made great haste to get rid of it, by dissolving it the year after. This

house held but one session, during which a law was proposed by the ministry on the subject of elections, which was regarded by the house as too democratic, and amended by the introduction of some aristocratic features. In this state, it was sent to the house of peers, and there rejected as too aristocratic; the French government presenting, at that time, the rather singular spectacle of a democratic house of peers, an aristocratic house of commons, and a neutral ministry. On the 5th of September, 1816, the house was dissolved by a royal ordinance, and no law having yet been passed, in consequence of the disagreement just mentioned, recurrence was had again to the old imperial system; the ductility of which was then displayed in full perfection; for although, from the growing influence of M. de Cases, the ministry had assumed a popular character since the last elections, the same forms which then discovered the undiscoverable chamber, now brought to light another, containing a large majority of voices, tuned precisely to the ministerial pitch. At this time the government exhibited a stronger appearance than at any other since the revolution, of an honest intention to embrace the true national policy. There was a perfect harmony among the three branches of the legislative power; and at the first session of the new house of deputies, a law was proposed on the subject of elections, conferring the right of suffrage,

agreeably to the charter, upon rather less than a hundred thousand of the richest proprietors, in a nation of nearly thirty million inhabitants. This law, aristocratic, one would think, if any thing could be so, was violently opposed by a party in parliament, as being of democratic tendency, a circumstance which, with a thousand others, evidently proved, that this party was not properly aristocratic, but anti-national. The law, however, passed by handsome majorities, and went into operation at the re-election of the fifth part of the house of deputies, whose term of service expired at the close of the next year.

The operation of this law was such as had been anticipated by its friends and its enemies. It was neither aristocratic nor democratic in any obnoxious sense of either term. The deputies returned by it were universally men of distinguished talents and high character, and, in most instances, of rank and property; but the great majority of them were acknowledged friends of the popular and national interest, in contradistinction to that of the emigrants. The effect of the law, in favouring the popular cause, was no doubt assisted in some degree by the influence of the ministry, which was then exercised in the same direction. But that its tendency was essentially the same as it appeared to be, is evident from two circumstances. First, the elections under it were, in several cases, more popular than was agreeable to the ministry, and

candidates were chosen, to whom they were opposed as too democratic. Thus the election of M. Benjamin Constant was defeated at Paris by the ministry, who united their influence with that of a section of the liberal party, in support of M. Ternaux, a wealthy manufacturer of the metropolis. Constant was, notwithstanding, returned at the same election from one of the country departments. Secondly, at the subsequent trials of the law, and especially at the third, when, in consequence of the intervening change in the policy of the cabinet, the ministry used its influence throughout against the liberal candidates, they were, notwithstanding, elected still more generally than they had been before. It is evident, from these circumstances, that the popular returns produced by the law, were not the effect of ministerial influence; but the natural result of the system. Accordingly, when the emigrant party obtained the ascendancy in the cabinet, they could not venture to depend upon their influence at the elections to neutralize the effect of this law, and give them such returns as suited their policy, but thought it absolutely necessary to new model the law itself. If then, all other proprietors and inhabitants being first excluded from the right of suffrage as too democratic, the hundred thousand richest individuals in the nation also exhibited a decided adherence to the popular cause, it follows, of necessity, that this is the cause of the nation; and that the whole mass of property is interested

in it alike, whether in possession of the higher or the lower ranks of society. The government were, therefore, informed, or might have been by the result of this experiment, that if they chose to adopt with frankness, and pursue with perseverance, a liberal policy, they should be supported in it by all the property, as well as all the population of the country, and that, if they entered upon a different one, the same forces would be arrayed against them. Such a piece of information, one would think, ought not to have been lost upon a sagacious and intelligent ministry.

A re-action, however, had commenced against the new law almost immediately after its adoption; and in the course of the session of 1818—19, a respectable member of the house of peers, the Marquis de Barthelemi, made a proposition for its amendment, which passed in that body. On this occasion, the law was defended by the ministry with great zeal, and the proposition was rejected in the house of deputies. It thus appeared that while the character of the lower house had been growing more popular, that of the upper had been taking an opposite direction, although there had been very little change in the persons composing it. To recover their influence in this branch of the legislature, the ministry took the strong measure of creating sixty new peers in one day, and this addition to the number of their friends, restored their majority. After these decided demon-

strations of attachment to the existing system of elections, it was hardly to be expected that the government itself would insist upon its being changed the very next year. But in the interval between this and the succeeding session of 1819—20, the tumults in England and Germany excited great uneasiness in all the governments of Europe; and the autumnal elections in France were not only wholly in the liberal interest, and much more decidedly so than was agreeable to the ministry, but several nominations were peculiarly obnoxious, and that of the Abbé Grégoire was regarded as absolutely scandalous. Notwithstanding this, the ministry exhibited at first a disposition to adhere to the system; but previously to the meeting of parliament, a different determination was taken, preceded, however, by the retirement of the three most popular members of the cabinet. It was now resolved that the ministry itself should propose a change in the system of elections, and the king announced the intention in his opening speech. It was probably found difficult to arrange the new law, as two or three months passed away without any proposition upon the subject. M. de Cases, who still retained his place at the head of the council, and has always been looked upon as firmly attached to the liberal interest, appears to have intended, as far as possible, to retain the essential principles of the existing system, admitting only some formal changes to satisfy the party opposed to it. Accordingly it does not appear that the law which

was finally prepared under his direction, had it been adopted, would have made any material alteration in the result of the system. The only important amendment introduced, was the provision that two-fifths of the deputies, instead of being chosen in the existing forms, should be named by a body of electors appointed for this purpose; but as these electors were to be appointed by the voters as they stood before, and as the other three-fifths of the deputies were to be chosen directly by the same voters, it is difficult to see how any change could have been produced in the political character of the returns.

But this plan was never brought to the test of experiment. After the public mind had been kept in anxious suspense upon the subject for two or three months, the presentation of it was at last fixed for the 13th of February, 1820; and, by a singular coincidence, the very night preceding occurred the assassination of the Duke of Berry. This event was followed by the retirement of Count de Cases; and by the complete ascendancy of the emigrant party in the cabinet. When the new ministry, after subjecting the press to censorship, and suspending the securities of personal liberty, took up the subject of the elections, they withdrew the new proposition of their predecessors, and substituted another, which, in substance, reduced the number of voters from a hundred to about twenty thousand. These electors

were to choose the deputies from candidates presented to them by the voters as they stood before: and in each department the several subdivisions, called *arrondissemens*, were to present a number of candidates equal to the number of deputies to which the department was entitled; and from these the electors, composing what were called the superior colleges, appointed the deputies: so that if the superior college could gain the votes of any one *arrondissement*, they secured the deputies for the whole department. The law might have been defeated by a combination among the *arrondissemens* to nominate the same persons; in which case the superior college could only have confirmed the choice. "This natural arrangement is adopted habitually by the towns composing electoral districts in our own country, and would, doubtless, have been resorted to in France, to the entire defeat of the objects of the law, had it not been foreseen and prevented by a provision, that if the same person were presented by two *arrondissemens*, he should be regarded as the candidate of that in which he had the greatest number of votes; and the person standing next him on the list presented by the other, taken for the candidate there. It would follow from this principle, that however unanimous might be the opinion of a department in favour of certain candidates, their election might be defeated by the superior college, if a single scattering vote could be gained for any body else. It is quite evident, therefore, that this

system gave the effective right of suffrage exclusively to the superior colleges, — that is, to the fifteen or twenty thousand richest individuals in France. In all probability, the twenty thousand richest proprietors are as little inclined to favour the policy of the emigrants, as the richest hundred thousand. But the ministry calculated, and it would seem from the result, with justice, that when the number of voters was reduced so low, they should be able, by patronage and influence, to control a majority.

Such was the scheme which was proposed to the deputies at the session of 1820, and which occupied the whole attention of the house — I might almost say of France, and indeed of Europe — for nearly three months in succession. It was a curious spectacle to see the same ministers — three of them still retaining their places — who had repulsed with such vigour, precisely a year before, any alteration in the existing system, as inexpedient, and even unconstitutional, now coming forward, without any material change of circumstances, to unsay their own language, and refute their own arguments. M. de Serre, the keeper of the seals, the ablest debater among the ministers, and the one who, the year before, had defended the then existing law with the greatest warmth, was now the most determined advocate of the new one. The opposition had only to recur to the newspapers of the preceding year, and they found

themselves supplied, in the speeches of the ministers, with every description of argument they wanted. Accordingly, not a day passed during the debate in which they were not placed repeatedly in contradiction with themselves. The question was at last taken upon the first article involving the principle of the law, and carried by a majority of five only; while, at the same time, the streets of Paris were occupied every night by tumultuous mobs, which it required the whole military force of the garrison to keep in check. In this state of things a slight accident might have produced the most important consequences; and the ministers recoiled from the danger of continuing the agitation of this question two or three weeks longer, the shortest time in which the debate could have been brought to a close. A compromise was agreed to, which met the views of a large majority of the house, and was carried almost without discussion. The choice of a number of deputies, equal to the whole number previously existing, is left to the electors as they stood; and an additional number, equal to two-fifths of the whole, is appointed by a superior college, composed of the richest fourth part of the chartered electors. This law was tried for the first time at the elections last autumn, and the superior colleges voted in general conformably to the views of the ministry. Having thus gained an accession of adherents equal to two-fifths of the whole number

of deputies, and possessing before a strong party in the house, they have been able, during the present session, to carry most of their measures by large majorities, though harassed by continual attacks from the more violent members of both parties.

Such is the present form of the political institutions of the French nation in this very interesting particular; and the government appears to have succeeded better, perhaps, than could reasonably have been expected, in solving the problem of a popular representation in which the people is not represented. The result of this experiment may serve to show that although, generally speaking, forms of election are comparatively indifferent, since property will have its natural and necessary influence under all—yet the right of suffrage should be at least sufficiently extended to place a majority of the voters beyond the immediate influence of the ministry. The government, for the purposes of influence, is itself a great proprietor; infinitely the greatest in the nation; and the same general causes that give the proprietors political weight, also give it to the government in proportion to the whole amount of the public revenue which annually passes through its hands. Where the administration continually emanates from the people, and returns to it, as with us, there is no separation of interest between it and the people; and of course no necessity to provide a check against its

influence; although, if such a check were necessary, it is fully supplied in our institutions by the general diffusion of the right of suffrage, and the economical character of all our political establishments. But in Europe, where the formal administration often have, or think they have, a strong interest to oppose the will of the people at large — if the pecuniary influence at the disposition of government is sufficient to corrupt or neutralize the whole body of voters — it is evident that the forms of representation are a mere farce. This is nearly the state of things in France, and to a great degree in England, — although the very irregularity of the forms established in the latter country, which appears, at first view, unfavourable to liberty, serves, in many cases, to defeat the influence of government.

In both these countries, however, as in all others, the forms under which the institutions of representative government presents itself are immaterial, in comparison with the essential circumstances of a general diffusion of property, and with it of substantial power. It is this which secures to the people the enjoyment of much practical liberty, notwithstanding the irregular forms and vast pecuniary influence of the British government, and this will maintain the French nation in possession of the same substantial blessing against the mistaken policy of the cabinet, and the delusive protection of a packed house of deputies.

2. If the forms of government existing in France are a much less agreeable subject of contemplation than the state of property, the policy of the cabinet, as I have hinted already, is also far from corresponding with the wishes of the best friends of the nation and of the reigning family. And this is the more unfortunate, as it would seem that the true course was indicated so clearly, that it could hardly have been mistaken. The king of France had before him, in the history of England, the example of two new dynasties, which had adopted precisely opposite systems of policy. The Stuarts, upon their return, attempted to govern, in opposition to the opinions and interests of the people. The House of Brunswick placed itself honestly and frankly at the head of the national feeling. The complete success of one system, and the complete failure of the other, are facts sufficiently notorious. Here then was a volume of instruction, where the doctrine hardly admitted of doubt or disputation. Overlooking these instances, and attempting to govern in the interest of the emigrants, the king, more unhappy even than the Stuarts, found himself compelled, in less than a year, to quit his country; and, what was still worse, to enter it again in the rear of a foreign army. By his conduct, while Bonaparte was marching towards the capital, and even by his declarations published at Ghent during the interregnum, the king admitted the errors into which

he had fallen; and left himself, of course, no excuse for a repetition of them. Yet since his second return, the course of policy adopted has been, with some occasional vacillation, substantially the same as it was after the first; and, at the present moment, is more decidedly anti-national than ever.

What, it may be enquired, are, in point of fact, the measures that make up this anti-national system? In this respect *what has not been done*, is perhaps of more importance than *what has been done*. At no period since the Restoration has the government possessed the confidence of the people. To acquire this was the first and most important object. Possessing the public confidence, they might have arranged the detail of their measures without fear of an opposition; but having failed in this, they can obtain no credit for their proceedings, supposing them even the wisest and most salutary that could be imagined.

It is urged, however, by the ministry and the royalists, that the party expressing dissatisfaction with the policy of the government is not to be considered as expressing the national sentiment. It is represented as consisting of a few ambitious, unprincipled demagogues, and a few honest, but visionary theorists, the dupes and instruments of the former. These two descriptions of persons, by their loquacity in public assemblies, and the zeal with which they promulgate their opinions through the medium of the press, by activity of

speech and fertility of pen, give themselves the appearance of representing a large and imposing section of the public; as two or three individuals in a fort, by frequently shifting their position and keeping up a rapid fire from several points, have been known to give the enemy the idea that the place was defended by a strong garrison. But imprison a few of these disturbers of the public peace, and deprive the rest of their means of operation by abolishing deliberative assemblies, and silencing the press; and, according to their hypothesis, you may put an end at once to party divisions, and establish a general uniformity of opinion through the whole society. Without entering here into an examination of the personal composition of the liberal party, upon which I shall touch slightly hereafter, it may be observed, in general, that it is utterly repugnant to the theory here stated, its leaders being among the most intelligent, wealthy, and respectable persons in the nation. Indeed, if there is any correctness in the view I have taken in the preceding chapter of the general composition of parties in Europe, the very imagination of such a system by the royalists is a sufficient proof how insensible they are to the present state of society, and consequently how incapable of directing the government. But independently of any general reasoning or preconceived opinion, the experiment of the election law of 1817, which I have already described, must have

satisfied every person, not completely blinded by prejudice, that the great mass of property throughout the country was in the liberal interest, carrying with it, of necessity, the mass of population and intellect.

It is urged again, however, that this popular party is unreasonable; that it is essentially hostile to the Bourbon dynasty, and to a monarchical form of government; that it aims at the establishment of a republic or a military despotism, and that of course it can never be trusted with power. This argument either proceeds upon the same misconception in regard to the composition and strength of the liberal party with the last; or it proves rather more than perhaps would suit the purpose of those who employ it. If it be true that the mass of population and property is resolutely hostile to the present form of government and the dynasty of the Bourbons, the proper conclusion perhaps would be, that it is their policy to abdicate at once. For a single family to make head against such a nation as France, I take to be wholly impracticable; and the attempt could only produce greater evils than abdication itself. But before adopting a system, which leads necessarily to such a conclusion as this, it might perhaps be expedient to make trial of the liberal party, to trust them for once, and learn by experiment their real intentions. This has not yet been done. It seems on the contrary to have been admitted as an

axiom, that if this party obtained an ascendant in the ministry, or a majority in parliament, inevitable ruin would follow at once. For myself I see no reason to suppose that there is any such hostility in the liberal party to the present government, or the Bourbon dynasty. There may be individuals among them attached to republican forms, although the experiment they made of that system had but little tendency to create such an attachment. Considered as a great party, supported by the population and property of the country, their object is not forms or families, but essential liberty. This they have already obtained in substance, by the revolution in the state of property, and in form by the charter. Their only important object at present is to secure what they have acquired, and to maintain the existing state of things. Nothing, of course, can be more contrary to the idea of revolution; and if the Bourbons ever exhibit a sincere intention to assist in these objects, they must, of necessity, obtain the undisguised attachment and support of the liberal party, because the interest of that party would then be identified with theirs; and there is little danger of mistake in predicting that their attachments and opinions will be determined by their interest.

I observe, with some surprise, in the same article of the Edinburgh Review to which I have already alluded, a disposition to countenance the imputation upon the liberal party of an ungovern-

able and seditious spirit. The reviewers seem to forget that this party is essentially the same with the whig party in England, which they habitually support. Are they prepared to admit the correctness of the similar charges made against their friends by the British ultras, with just as much foundation? As a proof that the liberal party are anxious for a republic or a despotism rather than substantial civil liberty, they quote a passage from a speech of one of the most distinguished orators of that party, General Foy, in which he remarks, that the French, if they cannot have liberty and glory, prefer a brilliant military despotism to a feudal aristocracy. Is it fair to consider this as a preference of despotism over liberty? I confess that if I were compelled to decide between these two evils, I should be disposed to make the same choice. Of all the kinds of government that have ever been practised, the feudal aristocracy of the middle ages seems to have been the most intolerable, uniting as it did all the horrors of complete anarchy with all the oppression of the most ruthless despotism. Then they say that the French can form no idea of any other aristocracy but a feudal one. How does this appear? It seems, on the contrary, to be the reviewers who can form no idea of any other. It is they who assert that the feudal law of primogeniture is absolutely necessary to form an aristocracy. The French deny this necessity, both in theory and practice; and are quite

confident that without feudal regulations they shall have all the aristocracy they want, or that is useful. It is a painful consideration; that while the enemies of liberty throughout Europe act together with the cordiality of a band of brothers, her friends in different nations are hardly disposed to acknowledge each other as allies. This is but a poor prognostic of the ultimate success of the cause. And in regard to the supposed seditious spirit of the liberal party, is it so very extraordinary that they should not feel confidence in a government which feels no confidence in them? This circumstance alone, independently of particular measures, is enough to justify all the discontent they have ever expressed or felt. Let an English politician who is disposed to deny this, reflect upon the state of public opinion in Great Britain at the close of the reign of Queen Anne; and recollect the curses that are still heaped upon the tory administration, which she was ill-advised enough to employ, and which was suspected, with justice, of being adverse to the existing establishments of the country, and to the cause of liberty.

This subject is much better treated by M. Guizot, one of the ablest and most judicious of the liberal politicians, in his late work on the present Situation of the French Government. He establishes satisfactorily, that whatever disorderly elements may by accident be connected with the liberal party, and he does not deny that there are some such,

they derive the little influence they possess wholly from the errors of the ministry, and that the party itself has no other object but the maintenance of the existing state of things, including the dynasty, whenever the dynasty, which it has not yet done, shall fairly identify its interest with that of the new establishments.

In reality, though the policy of the French government, like other established errors, is supported on general principles, it was not, probably, adopted as a matter of calculation, but was an almost necessary result of the difficulties attending the king's personal position at his return. He appears to have perceived the policy that suited his circumstances, and to have been himself sufficiently inclined to adopt it. It is probable even that it tallied with his own inclinations, as he was considered, at the commencement of the Revolution, an adherent of the popular party. The charter which he proclaimed immediately after his return was sufficiently liberal in its provisions to secure all interests and satisfy all opinions; and had he found it possible to conduct the administration with firmness and uniformity in the same principles, he would probably have obtained the confidence of the nation. Unfortunately there were two important points in which his position differed from that of the House of Brunswick, and which made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for him to strike at once with decision into the proper course.

One of these was his personal situation in regard to the emigrants; and the other, the existing relations between France and the great continental alliance.

The House of Brunswick were personally, as well as politically, connected with the national interest, and had no conflict to sustain between the dictates of duty and the demands of feeling and friendship. The Bourbons returned with a suite of adherents whose interest was adverse to that of all the new establishments, but who had sacrificed every thing in behalf of the royal family. Whether their policy in emigrating was right or wrong, in point of fact they had abandoned the highest rank and most brilliant fortune to accompany their fallen sovereign in exile and misery. They had taken up the cross to follow the Bourbons; and if the French nation had a right to blame their conduct, they might fairly expect indulgence and favour from their royal master. How was it possible for the king to drive from his person and condemn to obscurity and want his devoted followers and friends, who had ministered to him with their service and substance in the worst of times, when they could not reasonably expect any reward for their loyalty on this side the grave? Was the day of restoration and triumph to be only the consummation of ruin to the most affectionate partisans of the restored family? After buffeting the adverse torrent in their sovereign's

company for nearly thirty years, were they now to be cast off without recompence or thanks, just as the tide had turned and the port was opening before them? This was morally impossible. Their fidelity must in some way or other be rewarded. There was Scripture authority in their favour: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Inexorable duty would have turned a deaf ear to these suggestions of friendship, natural and amiable as it might appear to comply with them, and worthless as the crown itself might be justly held if purchased by so cruel a sacrifice. It was absolutely necessary, in order to ensure the confidence of the nation, that the government should be entrusted to persons of high character and acknowledged liberal opinions. Had Louis XVIII., instead of an intelligent and amiable man, been a Frederic, or even a *Henri Quatre*, he would have had the courage to submit to this hard necessity. Henry IV. made no scruple of sacrificing his religion, and with it his personal friends, to the interest of the state, at a time when religious opinions were as passionately embraced, and as perseveringly defended, as political ones are now; or rather when politics, and the great interests connected with it, passed under the name of religion. Here was an example worth imitation. Unfortunately a different policy prevailed, and the preten-

sions of the personal friends of the family were recognised to a great extent. The high offices of state — the commissions in the army — the embassies — the prefectures — the peerages and other civil and military posts of importance, were generally given to emigrants, decidedly attached to the old regime. Thus the government, which is little else than a vast proprietary concern, was entrusted to a class of persons, who had not only nothing at stake in the co-partnership; but whose personal feelings and interests pointed directly to the destruction of it, and the conversion of the property to their own use. This was to appoint a guardian for the flock, who had the acknowledged disposition, if he wanted the strength, of the wolf. The adoption of this system was, no doubt, owing in part to the influence of the princes, who made but little secret of their hostility to the new order of things. It is well known that the Count d'Artois, soon after the first restoration, held a very encouraging language towards the emigrants, *Jouissez du présent — je vous réponds de l'avenir* —. 'Enjoy the present — I warrant you the future.' Thus the French government exhibited precisely the same spectacle as was seen in England during the reign of Charles II.; an heir apparent avowedly hostile to the national interest, surrounded by adherents of the same description; a vacillating, intriguing cabinet; and a sovereign, who, though

intelligent and amiable, had never succeeded in obtaining the public confidence.

The other circumstance to which I have alluded as embarrassing the position of the king, was still more important. This was the relation in which he stood to the continental alliance. Here again his position differed wholly from that of the house Brunswick, which was placed upon the throne by the nation itself; while the king of France, on the contrary, had been restored by hostile armies, in direct opposition to the military part of his future subjects, and without the active co-operation of any of them, excepting the emigrants. It was therefore to foreign powers that he was immediately indebted for his throne; and it was impossible in such a situation not to listen with some degree of complacency and deference to their suggestions in regard to his political conduct. Unfortunately the advice he was likely to receive from these powers, was in direct opposition to the course imperiously prescribed by the internal situation of France, and its position in the European commonwealth. To place itself at the head of the constitutional interest in France; to place France at the head of the constitutional interest in Europe; these were the leading principles of the true domestic and foreign policy of the new government. But the great continental allies constituted themselves the anti-constitutional European interest; and were precisely the adverse party that France

was called to contend with. It was, therefore, their policy, and their effort, to deter the government from assuming its true position, or from giving it to France as a European power. During the era of good feelings that accompanied the fall of Bonaparte, when the nations were acting harmoniously, and in unison with their governments, and the present divisions had not yet grown up, the sovereigns, having observed upon the spot the strength of the constitutional interest, and not anticipating all the consequences of the measure, recommended and sanctioned the granting of the charter; a step, of which they have since sufficiently repented. But in accepting the system, they seem to have refused all its natural and necessary consequences; and to have supposed that a liberal constitution could exist in practice, without the slightest manifestation, by deed or word, of its essential principles. This expectation was of course disappointed; and when the constitutional spirit manifested itself so publicly and powerfully throughout Europe, and the great powers were seized with the terror of revolution at home, they began to look with disquiet upon what was passing in France. At every public proclamation of liberal ideas, they felt their thrones tottering under them. Every newspaper printed at Paris, seemed to them to carry sedition and disorder through the vast extent of Europe. When the heat and tumult, inseparable, to a greater or less extent,

from the free discussion of public measures, began to exhibit itself, they mistook these ordinary appearances of representative government, for the symptoms of a new revolution; and began to urge upon the king to resort to violent measures; and to attempt to govern the nation, in opposition to its opinions and feelings, and to the spirit of the institutions which he had himself sanctioned.

In making these remarks on the policy of the Allies, it is not my intention to include Great Britain among the number. The alliance of England with the great continental powers virtually ceased at the close of the war, with the cessation of the common interest that created it. In the new political system resulting from this change of circumstances Great Britain takes her place as a leading constitutional power; her interest is identified with that of France as a constitutional power, and with that of the constitutional party in France, and is opposed to that of the Northern Allies. Accordingly we have seen her openly disavow the connexion at the first collision of these great interests. Although the British ministers do not yet seem to have entered fully into the spirit of their new part, their advice to the French government has doubtless been, in the main, consistent with its true interest.

But the support of the great continental powers was of itself sufficient to give the emigrant party an importance at court and in the cabinet to

which they had no pretensions by their essential strength, and which they might not have obtained even from the personal attachment of the royal family. To the influence of these two circumstances, taken together, must be attributed the indecision and impolicy which have marked the proceedings of the government from the time of the first restoration up to the present day.

The return of Bonaparte from Elba, and the second invasion of France by the allies, which succeeded, without making any essential change in the situation of the country, rather aggravated the embarrassments of the king's position, by increasing his obligations to the allies, and to his personal adherents, whose fidelity had been tried once more by the touch-stone of adversity. It is uncertain how far the dissatisfaction of the people, at the preference given to the emigrants, may have contributed to favour the rash enterprise of Napoleon. On the one hand, it would scarcely seem that time enough had elapsed since the restoration, to give an opportunity for the measures adopted to produce a deep and general sentiment of dislike. This adventure occurred so near the close of the great action, that it naturally presents itself as a sort of epilogue. At the same time it is notorious that a sullen murmur of dissatisfaction had been heard through the nation, betraying a conviction that the Bourbons were not prepared to identify their cause with that of France. The govern-

ment itself, in the surprise and terror created by this unexpected and unexampled attack, lost its self-possession, and exhibited an evident consciousness of having acted before upon false principles. When the invader was half way on his journey to Paris, the royal family bethought themselves of satisfying the nation, that they were attached to the charter, by holding a solemn session of the parliament, and swearing to observe it; as if these 'vows made in pain,' which 'ease could so readily recant,' would restore in a moment the confidence that had been forfeited by a mistaken course of policy. The government, however, went even farther than this; and, in their proclamations from Ghent, candidly admitted that they had fallen into errors; a confession, which, coming from this quarter, may be fairly regarded as equivalent to a disavowal of the system which had been pursued.

It was probably with unwillingness, and under a sort of moral compulsion, that the king had consented to the adoption of this system at first: and having now discovered, by fatal experience, the impracticability of it, he seems to have determined that, at his second restoration, he would attach himself to the new order of things, and gain the confidence of the nation. We find, accordingly, that although he had been surrounded at Ghent by the most decided adherents of the emigrant party, M. de Châteaubriand acting as principal minister, the administration was organized anew,

immediately upon his arrival at Paris, in a manner probably intended to satisfy the people. It seems at least difficult to account in any other way for the introduction into the cabinet of such characters as Talleyrand, Fouché, Baron Louis, and Marshal Gouvion St. Cyr, the most prominent members of this ministry. At the same time the complexion of the house of deputies, nominated under its influence immediately after the king's return, was decidedly of a royalist character. This circumstance might be owing, in part, to the prostrate condition of the liberal party at this moment. They had unfortunately identified their interest, in a great measure, with that of Napoleon during the hundred days. Their leading characters composed his parliament, and filled his armies; and the disastrous issue of his enterprise, made it unsafe for them at present to appear in public. The national party, notwithstanding its essential strength, had, for the moment, neither organization nor leaders; and the complexion of the house was, perhaps, as much a natural result of the existing state of circumstances, as of the wishes of the cabinet.

However this may be, and in whatever way the influence of the ministry may have been employed upon the elections, it appears that they took the true national position, in regard to foreign powers. They resisted the hard conditions imposed upon France by the new treaty, and firmly refused to

sign it. As the allies persisted in their demands, the ministry was changed; and Fouché, whose policy it had been, of late, to maintain his credit with all parties at once, which could only be done by betraying them all, was disgraced. Immediately after the change of ministry, the negotiations were brought to a close, and the treaty concluded.

The new ministry was by no means of a decidedly *ultrà* cast, but rather of a moderate and neutral character. M. de Cases, the successor of Fouché, had not yet acquired his importance. M. de Barbe Marbois, minister of justice, was a known adherent of liberal principles. The ministers of finance and marine, Dubonchage and Corvetto, were not obnoxious to any party. The ministers of the interior and of war, the Duke of Feltre and M. de Vaublanc, were regarded as decided ultras. At the head of the administration was placed the Duke of Richelieu, whose nomination indicates the real principle upon which it was organized, the necessity of conforming to the views and dispositions of the allies. The Duke was generally respected as a person of amiable and generous dispositions, but was not recommended by any acknowledged superiority of talent; and as an emigrant could hardly be considered as agreeable to the nation. His chief or only recommendation was the personal friendship of the Emperor Alexander, by whom he had been employed, during his emigration, as governor of the

Crimea: and considering the relation which must necessarily exist, under the new political system, between France and Russia, it was not perhaps the strongest that could be imagined. The Duke had the advantage, it is true, of bearing one of those 'historical names,' to the possession of which Madame de Stael attaches so much importance; but unfortunately, as I am afraid would generally happen in such cases, his name was more likely to remind the nation of the sort of minister that was wanted, than his character was to satisfy their expectations. Had the spirit of the great Cardinal fallen with his title to his collateral descendant, the consequences of this appointment might have been very different from what they were. He might then have copied with advantage the laconic circular despatch, by which the cardinal announced his nomination to the French ambassadors abroad: "The king has changed his ministers, and the ministry has changed its policy." If we recur to the Cardinal's administration, we find him struggling with obstacles somewhat similar in character, though infinitely superior in magnitude, to those which the Duke must have encountered, had he embraced a decidedly liberal policy, yet victorious by the force of an energetic will, and founding the stability and greatness of the French monarchy, in the face of them all. His measures were always decisive; sometimes even brutal, but, upon the whole, advantageous

to the country. He quelled the religious troubles by force of arms; and imprisoned and exiled such of the royal family as dared to thwart his projects. Something less than this would have disconcerted the emigrants, and silenced the French princes at the present day; but such proceedings were entirely opposite to the Duke's character. He had nothing in common with the Cardinal, but his title; and his principal reputed virtue, a good heart, was one which the cardinal wanted, and which, had he possessed it, might have rather checked than assisted the accomplishment of his objects.

From this epoch may be dated the adoption of the pretended neutral system, which has not been wholly abandoned at any subsequent period, although pursued at times with a strong inclination to one or the other party; to the liberal interest under the presidency of M. de Cases, and to the opposite one at present. This system would admit of a better defence, if it were what it professes to be, a neutrality between two great hostile parties. If a nation were really divided into two such sections, each supported by an extensive and powerful portion of the population and property, the government would be placed in a delicate position. It would be difficult in these circumstances to ensure the public tranquillity by any scheme of policy; and an attempt to conciliate and amalgamate the two parties might, in certain

cases, be advisable. In general, perhaps, it would be a better plan to espouse the right side with frankness and vigour, and weaken the other as much as possible. But it does not appear that the French government were in reality obliged to contend with this difficulty; and it is the great fault of their system that it is not, as it professes to be, neutrality between two domestic parties, but neutrality between the nation and a few individuals, if we regard the internal strength of the emigrants — or if we look at their support from abroad — neutrality between France and the Northern Alliance. The position taken by the ministry is not so much the central point between the two sides of the chamber of deputies, as the half-way house on the road from Paris to Vienna, or St. Petersburg. By such a system they lose the support of the great national interests, which are all on the liberal side; and have nothing to replace them with, and to found their strength upon, but the terror of foreign invasion. Hence, as far as they deviate from a true national policy, in order to observe what they call neutrality, they make themselves in fact the lieutenants of foreign and essentially hostile powers, instead of the representatives of their country; the most odious position in which a government can be placed, and deservedly so, as the policy upon which it is predicated is marked with all the essential characters of treason; and even ignorance and error, when they lead us

to espouse the interest of foreign countries against that of our own, are rarely admitted as sufficient apologies.

In the year 1816, following the first adoption of the system in question, there arose in the cabinet a strong apparent inclination towards a better and more liberal policy, resulting in a great measure from the increasing influence of the minister of police, Count de Cases. The history and character of this statesman have since engaged the public attention to so great an extent, that it would be needless to enter here into much detail upon the subject. It is well known that, without the advantages of birth and fortune, he succeeded, by the amenity of his social habits, united, no doubt, with intellectual powers of a very respectable, though not the highest, order, and, I may add, by the soundness of his political views, in attracting the king's attention, and engaging in a very remarkable degree his personal favour. Under the reign of Bonaparte he had occupied an office of no great importance in the judiciary; and was afterwards private secretary to the ladies of the imperial family. During the interregnum, he remained in France, but distinguished himself by his adherence to the royal cause; and at the king's return was appointed prefect of police, the second office in that department, then under the direction of Fouché. Upon the removal of this minister, in September 1815, M. de Cases succeeded him;

and from this time he appears to have exercised a constantly increasing influence in the cabinet, until he became, at the close of the year 1818, in name as well as in reality, the president of the council of ministers. With the progress of his personal influence, may be traced a regularly increasing disposition in the government to adopt the true national policy. He was himself of popular extraction; and had no sympathies with the old aristocracy, or the emigrants. The policy of the emigration probably appeared to him, as it does to every body but those who took part in it, extremely questionable. He was young, and his attachment to the cause of liberty had not been cooled by contact with the horrors of the revolution. He was in many respects a person likely to be agreeable to the nation as minister; and, with a little more firmness of purpose, a little larger infusion of the unconquerable will, he might probably have decided for a length of time the politics of France; and if the view I have taken of the subject be correct, would have given them a much more fortunate turn than they have taken. Perhaps the stern resolution he wanted, might not have been compatible with the kind heart and insinuating manners, which procured him his personal influence with the king; and had he possessed the qualities necessary for doing the greatest possible good, he might not have had the official opportunity. However this may be, his

influence gave the policy of the government for a time a much more liberal aspect. The ordinance of Sept. 5, 1816, which dissolved the house of deputies, is universally attributed to him. Other corresponding steps of smaller importance, as the removal of M. de Châteaubriand from the council of state, were taken about the same time; and at the elections immediately ensuing, the influence of the ministry, as I have already observed, was exerted uniformly against the ultra candidates, and generally in favour of the liberal.

Meanwhile the emigrants, perceiving their influence in the cabinet to be on the decline, and reminded by the result of the elections, how little hold they had upon the nation, began to turn for support to the quarter where they placed their habitual, and indeed their only dependence, and entered into correspondence with the allied powers. One of their communications, in which they urged the interference of the allies with the king to procure a change of ministry, was intercepted by the government, and published under the title of the *Secret Note*. Yet, incredible as it may seem, such was the personal weight of the emigrants at court, that the ministry, after detecting and publishing this document, actually suppressed it themselves, doubtless at the instance of the princes, as it has never been pretended that it was not genuine. These private communications of the emigrants, and the gloomy forebodings

which they were continually pouring out through the public press, had their effect upon the allies; and the more, no doubt, as the interest of the allies themselves was favored by the policy which the emigrants recommended. In the autumn of 1818, the sovereigns assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, to deliberate upon the evacuation of France. This measure was agreed to, as well suited to conciliate the nation; but it is altogether probable, that, at the same time, they urged very strongly upon the French government the adoption of a course of policy, more agreeable to their views and those of the emigrants. This is probable, not only from considerations of a more general character, but from the intestine struggle which occurred in the cabinet, soon after the Duke de Richelieu's return from Aix-la-Chapelle, and which ended in his resignation, and in the appointment of M. de Cases to the presidency of the council. In this, as in other political intrigues, the whole affair is not before the public; but, from the circumstances which are known, it may be concluded, that M. de Richelieu urged the recomposition of the ministry, upon a system more agreeable to foreign powers, offering his resignation in the event of a refusal; and that the king, personally indisposed to such a proceeding, and satisfied of its political inexpediency, accepted his resignation, and organized the ministry anew upon a still more liberal footing than before. Thus the efforts of the

emigrants and the allies, produced, for the present, at least, an effect directly opposite to their expectations and wishes; and Count de Cases was elevated to the summit of official greatness by the very blow which was intended to level him with the dust. His nomination to the presidency marked the culminating point of the influence of the liberal party in the cabinet. After remaining a short time at about the same height, it has been steadily and gradually retrograding up to the present day.

The acrimony with which party disputes were conducted in France created uneasiness both at home and abroad; and the popular discontents in England and Germany greatly increased the sensibility of the governments upon this subject. Immediately after the elevation of M. de Cases to the presidency occurred the attack upon the election law in the house of peers, to which I have already alluded, and which was then defeated by the ministry. At each succeeding election, the operation of the existing law in favour of the liberal party became more and more evident; and it was soon very clear, that if it continued to subsist until the house of deputies had been wholly renewed under its operation, the emigrants must at once lose all their influence in parliament, and all hope of ever recovering it by the introduction of another system. The present moment was the only one in which they could labour with any ex-

pectation of ultimate success; and accordingly every engine, foreign and domestic, was put in motion to effect their purposes. Two circumstances, in a great measure accidental, probably did more for them than all their own machinations; I mean the election of the Abbé Grégoire as deputy, and the assassination of the Duke of Berry.

The former of these events occurred at the elections in the autumn of 1819, and seems to have given the first serious check to the influence of the liberal party in the cabinet. Under the circumstances, this nomination was doubtless both indecorous and impolitic. It served no purpose whatever, and it furnished the emigrants with a plausible theme for abuse and scandal. There is therefore a high degree of probability in the supposition, which is also maintained on no less authority than that of the prefect of the department where the choice was made, that the emigrants themselves, finding that Grégoire had unadvisedly been put in nomination, gave him their votes with a view of turning his election to account against the liberal party. The prefect, M. d'Arnouville, who was present at the time, and from his official character must have had a good opportunity to be acquainted with all that passed, published a pamphlet upon the subject, in which he asserts this fact, and substantiates it by a detailed account of the proceedings. However this may be, there was something truly infernal in the

rancour with which this venerable and really virtuous old man, who has long since repented of the errors of his earlier years, and atoned for them by a life of exemplary philanthropy and piety, was now assailed to serve the temporary purposes of party. They denounced him as a regicide, although he was confessedly not present in the convention at the trial of Louis XVI., under pretence that he had expressed his approbation of the sentence in his letters from the army, where he was then acting as commissioner. Had he been a regicide, he was still legally eligible; and after the king had publicly required of the nation to bury in oblivion all previous political errors, it was hardly admissible to question on this account the validity of the choice. There was even a gross absurdity in treating the mere quality of regicide, which they persisted with relentless perversity in fastening upon this man, as a sufficient motive for exclusion from the house of deputies, when the king himself had employed as a cabinet minister the acknowledged regicide Fouché. To increase the singularity of the whole transaction, it appeared, upon examining the question, that Grégoire was not eligible in the department where he was named. On this ground the choice was declared to be null; and as for the same reason he could not be re-elected, the affair never came to a regular decision. Notwithstanding the scandal created by this choice, and the apprehensions excited by some

others, which, though less publicly obnoxious, were regarded by the government as at least equally alarming, the ministry were inclined at first to persevere in their system. But further reflection, or perhaps the influence of foreign powers, produced a different determination, from which, however, the three most decidedly liberal members of the cabinet, General Dessoles, Baron Louis, and Marshall Gouvion St. Cyr dissented, and resigned their places. Count de Cases still held his post at the head of the council, thinking, probably, that by yielding a little for the present, he should ultimately be able to maintain his general scheme of policy. The new election law then proposed would in fact have made no material difference in the returns; and his anticipations would, in all probability, have been realized, but for the disastrous accident of the assassination of the Duke of Berry.

In other countries, perhaps at other times in France, this event would have been regarded as too grave and tragical to take its place in the vulgar category of political expedients. The worst foes of the ministry would have felt an honourable pride in clearing them from any share in so horrible a crime; if indeed the very idea of regarding the prime minister as an accomplice of a journeyman saddler in assassinating one of the royal family had not been too grossly incongruous to occur to any one not under the influence of a political fanaticism equivalent to absolute insanity.

The emigrants, however, thought it possible to connect this catastrophe with the existing political system; and looking at it in this point of view, they considered the event as a *God-send*, which, properly employed, would give the finishing stroke to the credit of the obnoxious favourite. The most furious of their partisans in the house of deputies brought in the next day a charge of high treason against Count de Cases as an accomplice in the assassination. It is but justice to add, that this disgraceful outrage upon decency was but slightly encouraged even by his own party. More effectual measures were adopted in other quarters. Circulars were despatched through the country, demanding of the adherents of the party something in the shape of turbulence and agitation, which might be construed into an expression of national dislike to the minister. At the same time a decisive blow was struck at court, where it is understood that the members of the royal family, male and female, made a joint onset upon the king's person, adjuring him, as he valued their lives and his own, to remove Count de Cases; and adding, that if he did not, they should be obliged to consult their own safety by quitting the kingdom. A truly energetic administration would have taken them at their word, and given them leave of absence, never to return, for so indecent an interference in the public affairs. But neither the temper of the times, nor that of the minister, ad-

mitted of this. Assailed in such an unprecedented and unprincipled way, he appears to have insisted himself upon retiring; and left the administration covered with new titles and honours, and with fresh marks of the king's personal favour. No sooner had he resigned, than circulars were again despatched through the country, countermanding the call for insurrection which had been issued before. By rather a singular accident, the two circular despatches here alluded to were discovered and printed; and purported, by their marks, to form a part of a regular correspondence. This discovery, however, was made somewhat later. Meanwhile, the Duke de Richelieu resumed his post at the head of the council; and the evil spirit of the emigration, finding the house of state empty, swept and garnished, entered in, and dwelt there. A new direction was given to the ministerial policy, which, without satisfying the most exaggerated of the party, it still decided enough to alarm and distress the mass of the nation, and the best friends of the royal family.

The series of measures with which the new administration began their operations was sufficiently portentous, to show that these alarms were not likely to prove altogether groundless. They were no less than a suspension of the securities of personal liberty, a subjection of the press to censorship, and a radical reform in the representation of the people. These measures, to which I have

already adverted, have occupied the whole attention of the government since the change of ministry. The only interesting question connected with the foreign relations of the country, the policy of France in reference to the revolution in Italy, will be touched upon in a separate chapter, in connexion with the general subject of the balance of power in Europe.

If the measures of external and internal policy, taken under the direction of the new ministry, have been well calculated to justify and increase the alarm of the nation, the apprehension generally entertained of an impending attack upon the security of landed property, obtained by the purchase of confiscated estates, creates a still deeper and more painful anxiety. In this question the interest of at least two-thirds of the proprietors in the kingdom, is directly involved. The impossibility of restoring their lost property to the emigrants, was distinctly felt at the time of the first restoration, and the validity of the new titles is formally warranted by the charter. The emigrants, however, have never been, and probably never will be, satisfied with this arrangement. Without the recovery of their estates, the Restoration is to them a mockery. To this point their views are constantly directed. Their extreme eagerness to obtain the management of public affairs is easily accounted for, on the supposition that they wish to use their political influence as a means of procur-

ing, in some form or other, the restitution of their property. While, on the other hand, the repugnance felt throughout the nation to their pretensions and opinions, results from a secret conviction that the stability of the present state of property depends upon the final prevalence of a liberal system of policy in the cabinet. Thus the real point in question between the parties is not so much which shall possess the political power, as which shall possess the private property of the country. While the administration is in liberal hands, the very magnitude of the pretensions of the emigrants is fitted to remove any anxiety about their success; but it serves as a measure for the fears of the parties interested when the emigrants themselves have the chief direction of the government.

Upon the first restoration, the confiscated property remaining unsold in the hands of the government was restored to the original owners. This measure, in itself sufficiently just, was, notwithstanding, of a nature to create some alarm, as it annulled political acts of thirty years' standing, connected with this very delicate subject. Not long after, a proposition was made in the house of peers, to create a large amount of public debt to be assigned to the emigrant proprietors, as an indemnity for their losses. This plan, though not in formal opposition to the letter of the charter, was as much opposed to its spirit, as a restoration of the land itself. It was making the present pro-

prietors pay in the form of taxes imposed by the state, what, in case of restoration, they would pay in the form of rents to their lords. This plan was not adopted; but the mere proposition of it had no small share in producing the discontent that preceded the return of Bonaparte. It has not been renewed since the Restoration, and while the liberal party predominated in parliament and in the ministry, the very idea of such a thing was frowned upon in all quarters. Even the emigrants asserted that it was a calumny to charge them with any intention of obtaining either restitution or indemnity. No sooner, however, did the political scale turn in their favour, than these odious pretensions begin to re-appear. In the course of the present session, it has been repeatedly intimated by the emigrants, that if they have not made any proposition yet, it is because they expect one to be made by the government; and the ministry have countenanced the expectation. One of the more violent went so far as to state publicly in a speech, that they would not now be satisfied with *indemnity*, but must have *restitution*. This remark being rather pointedly noticed on the other side, he afterwards explained himself to mean a restitution to the emigrants of the price paid originally by the new purchasers to the government. This construction appears rather forced. Whether or not it was his first intention, the general effect upon the public is precisely the same.

They find the pretensions of these persons regularly increasing with their power; and if their power continues to advance, it is pretty easy to foresee where their pretensions will finally arrive. The fanaticism and imprudence of the clergy tend strongly to increase the alarm upon this subject. Many of them declare it to be an act of impiety to retain this description of property, and sometimes refuse absolution upon their death-beds to its owners. Books are frequently published in favour of the pretensions of the emigrants; and in a late instance, where the writer of one of them was prosecuted for it by the government, the singular and even complimentary indulgence with which he was treated, and which naturally led to his acquittal, seemed to prove either that the ministry repented of what they had done, or that their object was to encourage such publications rather than to check them.

If no accident should previously occur to effect a change in the policy of the French cabinet, it is altogether probable that the influence of the emigrants will finally split upon this rock, and that at no very distant period.* It is not unlikely.

* Since the above was written, symptoms have appeared in the cabinet of another return to liberal principles. At the commencement of the last session of the chambers, two of the principal leaders of the emigrants in the house of deputies, Messrs. de Villele and de Corbieres had been appointed cabinet ministers in order to consolidate the union between the ministry

that a proposition will be made upon this subject at the next session of parliament by the government, and even if it passes into the form of a law; it is not easy to see how the attempt to carry it into execution can end otherwise than in a change of ministry or a change of dynasty. The government would doubtless recur to the former in time to avoid the latter. It is impossible, in the nature of things, that the great body of proprietors will allow themselves to be despoiled of their estates either in form or substance. They are the persons who possess the effective political power, and they

and the emigrants. They were, however, not entrusted with departments; the former ministers all retaining their places. The emigrants, considering this as a step towards complete ascendancy, were satisfied for a time, and generally supported the government during that session. But towards the close of it, they began to show symptoms of uneasiness, and of a determination to break with the ministry, unless they could obtain a better standing in the cabinet. They accordingly opposed several important measures, and treated the ministry in debate with gross disrespect. After the session was over, a struggle took place in the cabinet, the details of which are, of course, not fully known. It is supposed that Messrs. de Villele and de Corbieres insisted upon some changes favourable to the emigrants, and not being able to obtain them, resigned in consequence. Whatever the immediate motive may have been, they certainly resigned, and at the same time M. de Châteaubriand resigned his places as minister of state and minister plenipotentiary at Berlin. These changes will probably be followed by others in the course of the next session, as the alliance between the ministry and the emigrants is considered as broken by their resignation, and the ministry must resort to new combinations in order to secure a majority of the deputies.

will surely exercise it, if ever, in defence of their property. An attempt to unsettle the property of the country, if actually made, as seems at present but too probable, will be a reach of madness beyond any thing in the proceedings of the Stuarts. It could hardly fail to ensure the ruin of its authors, and I think I may add, without fear of contradiction from any impartial person, would show that they deserve it.

3. In consequence of the course of proceedings I have been describing, the situation of public opinion is far from being so tranquil and satisfactory as it probably would have been under a different one, considering the really advantageous position of France. The emigrants, though destitute of internal strength, being countenanced by the court, and representing the interest of the great foreign powers, exhibit all the outward appearances of an imposing and powerful party. Their opponents, on the other hand, are strong in the support and attachment of the country, and in the essential justice and liberality of their cause. It is here, in fact, and here only, that the two great European interests are fairly in presence. In every other part of the continent, excepting Spain, the expression of liberal opinions is restrained by that most pointed of arguments, the bayonet. In England, though the government does not uniformly proceed upon the most enlarged political notions, the opinions of all the considerable parties

are more or less strongly marked with liberality. There are some newspapers and other journals which maintain the ultra system in regard to continental affairs; but as they cannot venture to apply their principles to the concerns of their own country, they form no domestic party, and are not countenanced by the government in their views of foreign politics. On this subject public opinion in England may be considered as wholly on the liberal side. It is only in France, therefore, at the present moment, that the parties are fairly at issue. The agitation and zeal which must naturally attend the public discussion of such great interests may be easily imagined; and I may add, that the ability with which the controversy is conducted on both sides does honour to the nation which furnishes the combatants. In this, as in other cases, it is by no means the right side that can uniformly boast of the ablest champions. The press and the parliament are the two great theatres of action. Since the restoration of the preliminary censorship on the journals, the latter affords the most interesting spectacle. Pamphlets are still free; but as they cannot be commented upon, or even noticed in the newspapers, their circulation is comparatively limited, except when they proceed from the pens of a few well known writers, whose names alone are a sufficient advertisement and passport for all they publish.

For nearly two years, during the time when

M. de Cases was in credit, the press was wholly or substantially free. I had an opportunity of seeing most of the periodical publications and newspapers of this period, and am fully satisfied that the same freedom might have been maintained without any real danger to the public tranquillity. The respectable journals were all conducted with the same decency as in England and the United States. Public opinion, and regard for their own interest, evidently exercised the same salutary and sufficient check upon the editors, as it does in those countries. Nor was there in the less considerable publications any thing like the disgusting excess which has disgraced the cheap periodical papers in England for some years past. There were boldness and violence on both sides, pushed occasionally to the line where they touch upon extravagance; but nothing which a person habituated to the forms, and attached to the spirit of representative government, would have thought of taking offence at, or regarded as dangerous. The nearest approaches to excess, and the most marked violence, were on the side of the emigrants, perhaps because they were then the weaker party. The daily papers were conducted with more ability than the best that appear in England or with us. Beside these there were two periodical pamphlets, the *Conservateur*, or *Preserver*, and the *Minerve*, which served as the leading organs of the two opinions, and held the same place in the political literature

of the country which is occupied by the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews* in England; but appeared more frequently, and were conducted with a more immediate reference to passing events. They were circulated very extensively through every part of the continent. The Viscount de Châteaubriand was the principal editor of the *Conservateur*, and Mr. Benjamin Constant of the *Minerve*. These names alone, which are among the very first in contemporary French literature, are sufficient to show the respectability of the publications in question. Their editors were also assisted by other writers of distinguished talent; and every article was uniformly signed by its author's name. When the journals were again subjected to restraint, these remarkable publications were both discontinued. The writers, with a high spirit, not less honourable to them than the vigour and elegance of their productions, disdained to submit the shoots of their genius to the pruning knife of mercenary mediocrity.

Of the two persons I have mentioned, both possessing merit of a very high order, Constant is the clearest thinker, and Châteaubriand the most powerful writer. The latter is essentially a poet, although he has never published any thing in verse, and is pronounced with justice by the Edinburgh Review to be the best poet now living in France. He employs the stately style of which the writings of Dr. Johnson are a favourable specimen, and Macpherson's Ossian a caricature. His reach of

mind, in regard to general subjects, seems to be limited: and he often reasons without any apparent feeling for logical consistency and truth. Constant, although he has published some tolerable poetry, and writes in prose with great elegance, is still more remarkable perhaps for the justice and precision of his views on general subjects, and is therefore essentially a philosopher. His style is lucid and correct, but not always sufficiently pointed and nervous: and if not animated by the immediate interest of the subject in discussion, is often rather cold. Hence he is, upon the whole, a less popular writer than Châteaubriand; as the public is more taken with poetical and pompous language, than with just and perspicuous reasoning, or even original thought.

Beside these, there were other political writers of merit, who laboured in general in a larger sphere of action, and contributed but rarely, if ever, to the journals. The liberal party had just sustained a severe loss in the most celebrated of its literary champions, Madame de Stael, the first of female writers, always animated by a truly liberal spirit, although her views on particular subjects were often warped by the warmth of her feelings, and the liveliness of her imagination, from the strict line of truth. M. de Pradt was still left to supply her place with greater activity, if not with equal talent; a politician who, to use his own facetious phrase, has assisted *extra muros* at all the

congresses which have been held in Europe, since that of Rastadt; in some respects the most remarkable writer of pamphlets that has appeared since the time of Burke; but without any pretensions to his force of language or logic, although engaged in a juster and more generous cause. At a later period, M. Guizot distinguished himself by a publication to which I have already alluded, and which created in France more sensation than any single political work that has appeared since the king's return. On the opposite side, the most distinguished writer after Châteaubriand was the Viscount de Bonald, pronounced by Madame de Stael to be *the philosopher of anti-philosophy*. His style has too much of the obscurity from which her's was not always free, and none of the poetical colouring with which she redeemed that and her other faults. The only quality that gives his writings any flavour, is a strong infusion of bitterness. The Abbé de la Mennais is much before him in point of style. He treats political subjects entirely in a theological point of view, and of course only in the most general and abstract form, except where measures relating to the church are under discussion. Two or three foreigners, who write in French, and publish at Paris, have acquired some distinction on the same side. M. de Haller, late a member of the republican government of Berne, claims the honourable title of the modern Bacon. He is publishing a voluminous work, entitled the

Restoration of Political Science, which he assures us elsewhere is exciting a profound sensation throughout Europe, and appears destined to produce the most important results. This person has lately been converted from the Protestant to the Catholic faith; and has thereby lost his place in the government of Berne. In the pamphlet, in which he gives an account of this event, he states expressly, that he looks upon himself as specially raised up by Providence, to effect a great reformation in Europe; the consummation of which is to be the return of all wandering Protestant sheep to the Catholic fold. Lastly, the late Count de Maistre, formerly minister plenipotentiary in Russia, and afterwards minister of state in the service of the King of Sardinia, has defended, in a variety of publications, the doctrines of orthodoxy in religion and politics, which are now generally coupled together by their champions, the former meaning popery. *Of what use*, he inquires in one of these works, *are general councils to bring back heretics to the faith? Is not the pillory sufficient?* This passage may give the measure of his liberality and humanity. His books, however, are printed in various languages, and circulated gratis by the religious associations on the continent.

In general, the effort made by the anti-constitutional party in Europe to unite their cause with that of religion, and the point of view under which they present this subject, in order to effect their

purposes, are proofs either of gross hypocrisy, or of almost incredible fanaticism. It is hardly necessary to remark, what is felt and acknowledged by every person of intelligence, that, in the present age, the most expedient course for maintaining the influence of religious sentiments over the public mind, is to allow the spirit of enquiry to proceed without opposition, in clearing away the erroneous and superstitious appendages which have been connected with these sentiments at other periods in the progress of society. The only principle which can be admitted as a qualification of this, is the necessity of exercising caution in the change of established forms and institutions. But this party are so blindly bent upon accomplishing their immediate ends, that they wish to break up existing forms, not in order to substitute new ones more analogous to the substance, but in order to bring back the still more antiquated and irrational usages of a wholly barbarous age. The restoration of the unity of the Christian church is one of the leading objects upon which they are accustomed to insist. All good men must join them in wishing for its accomplishment; and all intelligent men must perceive, that it is very rapidly approaching, in the form of a constantly increasing conviction among all the sects that the points which divide them are immaterial, and that the spirit of Christianity resides in those which are common to them all. We have seen accordingly, within a few years, the two

principal sects of Protestants in Germany publicly uniting; and the alliance founded avowedly on a religious basis between three sovereigns, each adhering to a separate creed, is at once a strong confirmation of this remark; and a signal proof, how thoroughly the spirit of the age has penetrated into every corner of the Christian world, since the very persons who call themselves its enemies, and are constantly decrying it, act almost unconsciously under its influence, whenever it does not contradict their immediate objects. But not content with this gradual and rapid progress, the party in question can imagine no other way of accomplishing the desired union, but by the formal return of all heretics to the Catholic faith, and the universal acknowledgement of the infallibility of the Pope, unlimited even by the restrictions with which it was qualified by the Catholics themselves at the first dawn of reviving intelligence in Europe.

As this party are confessedly more rigid Catholics than the Pope, so it is one of their distinguishing characters, as they appear in France, that they are better royalists than the king, and hence their designation of *ultras*. They made but little secret of their contempt for his person and policy, and publicly assumed as their device, *Vive le Roi, quand même*. 'God save the King, nevertheless.' This expression, which wears an ambiguous form, was customary among the royalists in *la Vendée*, when the cause of the Bourbons was at the lowest ebb;

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and then meant, that those who used it, were true to the royal family, notwithstanding their disastrous fortune. It was now understood to mean, that they would be true to the king, although he had ceased to be true to himself.

In parliament, the opinions of the contending parties are expressed with a vivacity very characteristic of the national character, and with a variety of shades and subdivisions, resulting in part from the same cause. The house of deputies is regularly separated into three sections; the right and left sides, and the centre. The two former support respectively the constitutional and anti-constitutional opinions; and the last is composed of the adherents of the ministry, as such, and consists, in a great measure, of public functionaries. This arrangement of the house results from the neutralising system, which has prevailed in the cabinet; and the ministerial majority is obtained by the concurrence of one or the other opposition with their immediate partisans. The union of the two hostile parties against a measure, would at any time defeat it. This result has often happened; and it also happens very frequently, that the ministry carry a measure in opposition to the party, which they generally favour, by the assistance of the other. The two parties, though bitterly opposed in points of faith, often agree in their opinions on matters of discipline, in consequence of their common interest, as parties in op-

position. They both unite in claiming the liberty of the press; and even in the present session, when the ministry have exhibited so strong a leaning to the emigrants, the committee appointed by the usual ministerial majority, composed of this party and the centre, to make a report upon a law proposed by the government for the continuance of the restraints on the journals, have concluded against it. Each party is so perfectly confident of the justice of its cause, and the ability of its champions, that both are quite certain of ultimate success, if they are permitted to carry on the war with freedom. They spurn at the idea that public discussions are attended with any danger to the state; and pretend, that it is only the conscious imbecility of the ministry which makes them fear to encounter the shock of unrestrained criticism. Whatever danger may exist, they are willing to risk, and with the generous indignation, felt by Ajax in the Iliad at the idea of fighting under a cloud, they are even ready to perish, if in dying they can leave a sting in the wound they inflict upon their adversary.

Ζευ πατερ, αλλα συ ῥυσαι υπ' ηερος υιας Αχαιων;
Ποιησον δ' αιθρην; δος δ' οφθαλμοισιν ιδεσθαι,
Εν δε φαει δ' ολεσον, ει νυ σοι ευαδεν ουτως.

Besides these three principal divisions of the house, there existed, during the period of the ad-

ministration of M. de Cases, and of the prevalence of a more liberal policy in the cabinet, a subdivision of the left side, commonly called by their adversaries, the *doctrinaires*, or *pedants*, which at that time gave the tone to the majority, but which, by the change of circumstances and parties, has since ceased to exist. The individuals composing it were decidedly liberal, and of course removed even then by a considerable shade of difference from the merely ministerial party, and for the same reason obnoxious to the emigrants; but being not less remarkable for learning and moderation than for liberal principles, they were often at variance with the most determined and violent members of their own side. Their opponents sometimes found it convenient not to understand what they could not very readily confute, and affected to describe them as obscure and metaphysical reasoners; and in reality some of them occasionally entered more at large into abstract discussions than is quite suitable to the practical dispatch of business; although the ability with which they managed such enquiries always did them great honour. Of the small number of persons composing this *coterie*, M. de Serre, one of the ministry, has since enlisted under the royalist banner. MM. Camille Jordan and Royer Collard, then members of the council of state, were subsequently removed from this post, and the former is since dead. The latter is still the principal representative in the house of the same opi-

nions, but, from the change of circumstances, has but little influence. His speeches on important subjects are perhaps the most remarkable specimens of scientific political reasoning that have ever appeared in any country in this form. This style of speaking is rarely attempted either in the British parliament or in congress. The speeches of Burke and of Sir James Mackintosh give a better idea of it than any others in the English language. They are, however, less abstract, and considered as specimens of eloquence, are for that reason doubtless superior. M. Guizot, whom I have already mentioned, is the most remarkable writer attached to this party. He was also a member of the council of state, and was removed at the same time with the others; on account of his youth he was not eligible to the house of deputies.

With these remarks on the situation of public opinion, and the modes and varieties of its expression, I shall close this imperfect sketch of the state of France, which indeed has already exceeded the extent prescribed by the narrow limits of the present attempt. The substance of it may be recapitulated in a very few words. The political constitution of France is sound and vigorous in its essential parts beyond that of any other nation in Europe. The outward appearance exhibits morbid symptoms, at first view, of a serious and alarming character; but which, examined more nearly, can hardly be regarded as dangerous, and must soon

vanish under the restoring influence of an active vital principle within. If we cross the Pyrenees, we arrive in a region placed for the present in a far less agreeable situation, but which holds out, nevertheless, the most encouraging prospects for the future.

CHAP. III.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

It may seem paradoxical to regard the revolutions in Spain and Portugal in favour of popular principles as natural results of the progress of industry, wealth, and civilization, considering that, in all these respects, the peninsula has been for two or three centuries apparently on the decline. It is however sufficiently obvious that these revolutions are in reality connected with the general effort for political improvement that agitates the whole Christian world, and are not isolated events, resulting from independent and separate causes. If therefore the apparent anomaly did not admit of a satisfactory explanation, it could only be, because the facts connected with the subject were imperfectly known. The following considerations will perhaps be thought to furnish a sufficiently plausible account of it.

As valuable political institutions contribute more than any other cause to the improvement and prosperity of a country, so they derive, in their turn, their own stability and strength from the re-action of these effects upon themselves. A vicious con-

stitution, and its natural attendant, a vicious course of administration, while they tend to destroy all the sources of the public welfare, affect in the same, or in a still greater degree, the vigour and firmness of the government. When a nation has once entered upon a retrograde course, the natural progress is undoubtedly from bad to worse; and the natural conclusion is a state of utter desolation and complete physical ruin, as we see exemplified in the Mahometan countries. But if any accidental causes, from within or from without, counteract this movement, and impress a different direction on the character and condition of the people, an effort for political improvement will meet with less resistance from the government, precisely in proportion to the degree of degradation into which the nation had previously sunk, because the government is necessarily feeble to the same or a greater extent. Hence an amount of moral or physical force, enlisted in the cause of civilization, will be sufficient to produce a complete revolution in Spain and Portugal, which would not have excited a moment's apprehension in the governments of France or England. A still smaller force would produce the same effects in Morocco, Turkey, Persia, or Egypt, because these countries have fallen still lower in the scale of civilization, and their governments are proportionately still more feeble. The only difficulty is to impart to a people in such a situation even the slight healthy movement necessary to

change their direction, and overcome the first obstacles. Every thing in nature occurs by the operation of general causes; and when these have been depraved, and their operation has become vicious, it would be as unreasonable to expect the natural occurrence of any favourable event, as it would to look for the appearance of disease in a perfectly healthy body without any previous unfavourable accident from within or without. Thus we see the Mahometan countries that have just been mentioned, going on from age to age in progressive and gradually increasing decay, although the appearance of a single individual of a certain elevation of character in any one of them would be sufficient to regenerate the whole. Another Mahomet would restore with comparative ease the prosperity and power which the first created; and though the appearance of such an individual is almost impossible in the regular progress of events, it is really surprising that it should not have been brought about by some favourable accident, considering the intimate relations between the Mahometan countries and those of Europe.

The situation of Spain was more fortunate for this purpose, and it has been for some time under the operation of causes, internal and external, tending to counteract the progress of decay, and to impress a favourable direction on the movement of the body politic.

1. It is by no means true, as is perhaps gene-

rally supposed, that Spain had been constantly declining up to the period of the invasion of Bonaparte. The best statistical and political accounts prove, on the contrary, that the epoch of the greatest weakness and degradation of that country should be fixed more than a century ago, at the close of the war of the succession. A long course of previous misgovernment, and the desolation carried through the country by that wanton and ruinous struggle, had reduced the population from twenty or thirty millions, which it is said to have contained at some previous periods in its history, to about six. The restoration of peace, the introduction of a better spirit into the cabinet, and the encouragement given to industry by the great developement of commerce, which then occurred throughout the world, operated together to change the course of events; and from that time to the present, notwithstanding the obstacles opposed to their progress by vicious institutions of every description, industry and wealth seem to have been regularly and rapidly advancing, and to such an extent, that in the century following the war of the succession, the population of Spain was doubled, being now calculated at nearly twelve millions. This is a greater augmentation of numbers, and implies a more favourable change in the situation of the country, than occurred during the same period, in any other in Europe, excepting Great Britain, which also doubled its population

within the same time. The whole additional force thus created, constituting, in fact, the only effective political power in the country, was necessarily attached to the cause of political reform; or, in other words, was desirous of the removal of the wanton and senseless obstacles to the public welfare, in opposition to which it had risen into existence, and with which it was constantly struggling for life and death.

2. The operation of this favourable internal cause was greatly increased by the contact, which, notwithstanding its isolated and apparently stagnant position, necessarily existed between Spain and the other nations of Europe. Europe forms in reality but one great commonwealth, and its members sympathise with each other, like the limbs of an organised body. On the common principles which regulate the sympathy and communication between different divisions of the same system, it was natural, after an active spirit of reform and improvement had become general in Europe, that a considerable portion of it should pass into Spain, precisely because that country was among those that afforded the greatest field for its exercise, and stood most in need of its assistance. The friends of liberty in Spain were enlightened and encouraged, and inspired by the enterprise and success of the friends of liberty in England, France, and America. The principle of improvement which had sprung up at home,

and which, under other circumstances, might not have proved strong enough to resist the influence of vicious institutions, and might have withered and died away under their continuing pressure, was cherished and strengthened from abroad. With such aid, it continued to act with increasing effect, and the country was at length in a situation to take advantage of any favourable circumstance that might present itself for obtaining an improvement in its political institutions. Hence, when the convulsions of the French revolution extended into Spain, when Bonaparte had finally, in a moment of something more than his habitual wantonness and wickedness, kidnapped the royal family, and garrisoned all the strong places with his troops, there was found a mass of population, and intelligence, and character, competent to resist this aggression, and to give the invader such a reception as he had little calculated upon, from any efforts of the government.

For while the nation had been advancing in industry, wealth, and population, the government had taken very little, if any share, in this course of improvement. The gleam of intelligence and humanity that appeared in the cabinet, after the war of the succession, departed with the individuals from whom it emanated, without having produced any effect on the form or spirit of the existing institutions. And at no period in the history of Spain, had the cabinet exhibited a more

disgusting spectacle of imbecility and iniquity, than at the one immediately preceding the French invasion. It must have fallen at the first attack from within or without; and if the shock had not been given by a foreign invader, the spirit of improvement would have displayed itself very shortly in the form of internal convulsions.

Hence too, when the king upon his return rejected the constitution, and dissolved the Cortes, the whole effective part of the nation separated itself from him, and entered spontaneously into a virtual, and, very soon after, into an actual secret association against his government. The whole peninsula was divided into regions and districts, all regularly organised for the purpose of correspondence and communication. This vast organisation appears to have assumed at first, in order to disguise its objects the better, the garb of masonry; and hence arose the fury with which the Inquisition at that time denounced and persecuted all masonic societies. It comprehended almost every person of consideration in the country, excepting the higher clergy, a great part of the public functionaries, governors of provinces, and nearly all the officers in the army. The postmasters were also generally in the same interest; and I have been assured, by a person who was himself an active member of this association, that, for a length of time, the whole correspondence of the country

regularly passed through the hands of its agents, and was opened and examined by them, the government itself not thinking it necessary, at that time, to exercise any such police. So vast an intrigue could not wholly escape the attention of the ministry, however infatuated and feeble. It was denounced and detected; its papers were seized; vast numbers of its members were arrested and imprisoned, and others compelled to flee the country. Still the association continued in a more secret shape. The several abortive conspiracies that occurred from time to time, were only imprudent or precipitate attempts, inspired by the great general design; and its existence was sufficiently manifested by the simultaneous movements that finally occurred at once, in aid of the last successful enterprise, at so many different points of the peninsula. These secret proceedings, anterior to the public revolutionary events, are not yet within the domain of history, and are imperfectly known in their details; but I can vouch, from information derived immediately from unquestionable authorities, for the correctness of the general facts here stated; the most important of which are also recorded in the best memoirs of the Spanish revolution.

These circumstances then seem to account sufficiently for the occurrence of a revolution in favour of liberty in Spain, notwithstanding its apparent state of hopeless degradation. It is highly

satisfactory to be able to consider this important event as the result of general causes, and not merely as the wild enterprise of a few revolted regiments. Had it been a movement of this description, it might have been quelled with the same expedition with which it was undertaken; and have left no more traces in the history of the country, than an occasional revolt of the Janissaries does in Turkey. If we are at liberty to regard it as founded in the condition and feelings of the nation, there is reason to hope that it will result in the ultimate establishment of liberal institutions, whatever convulsions may attend its progress.

The military and political events of this revolution are of too recent occurrence, and of too public a character, to require a recapitulation. Its immediate results are so uncertain, and in a course of such rapid accomplishment, that it would be at once rash and useless to pretend to conjecture their character. It can hardly be denied, even by its enemies, that the revolution has thus far been conducted with extraordinary wisdom and moderation; and that the excesses on the side of the friends of liberty, considering the difficulties of their position, and the provocations they have received, have been very trifling. If it could be hoped that the enemies of the new system, who are principally from the higher clergy, would abstain from their treasonable machinations against

it, there might be much reason for indulging the expectation that this great reform would be carried through in the same discreet and temperate spirit in which it was begun. Unfortunately it appears probable, that these counter revolutionary attempts are rather increasing than diminishing; and it is also morally certain that the king himself is ill-advised enough to give his confidence to secret counsellors, instead of his constitutional and responsible ministers. It is even asserted in late newspapers, that letters have been intercepted addressed by order of Ferdinand to the curate Merino, the leader of a horde of banditti in open rebellion against the government. However this may be, the occurrences attending the change of ministry leave no doubt upon the general fact above stated. At the opening of the Cortes, the king, after delivering the speech which had been prepared and adopted in the council of ministers, concluded with a number of additional remarks on the dangers which he conceived to threaten his own person. This imprudent and unconstitutional proceeding was necessarily followed by the resignation of the ministers; and in a country where the doctrine of ministerial responsibility was well understood and habitually acted upon, the king would have met with some difficulty in finding any persons of high character to take their places. The fact proves to a demonstration, that he is under the influence of a private council, composed,

beyond a doubt, of priests, who act upon his mind by the engine of fanaticism. The probable consequences of such imprudence and weakness to the tranquillity of the country, and to the safety of the unfortunate monarch himself, are but too evident. But in this, as in other matters relating to the immediate future prospects of the country, conjectures are worse than unprofitable. It may be sufficient, if we venture to anticipate from present appearances, as the general result of the revolution, the establishment of political institutions founded in rational liberty, after an intervening period of danger, difficulty, and probably serious convulsions. This prediction, the only one that can be made with a good degree of confidence, is about as precise and edifying as the prophecies in the almanac, of snow in February, and warm weather in June. Without dwelling any longer on this part of the subject, I shall add a few general remarks on the Spanish constitution, and on the probable effects of the revolution on the situation of the colonies. These observations will apply equally to Spain and Portugal, which are placed in both these respects in precisely similar circumstances, their constitutions and colonial relations being substantially the same.

1. The Spanish constitution was drawn up at a period of great embarrassment; and there might be some reason for surprise that it is as good as we find it, were it not that, in reality, there is

very little difficulty in putting together upon paper the elementary principles of government, and tracing a form of practical administration. Of these forms an infinite variety may be imagined, and chalked out; and the practical effect of all will probably be in substance nearly the same, because they are all controlled in their operation by causes of a higher and more general nature, founded in the condition and character of the people upon which they are to operate. The forms of government were the same at Rome under the emperors as they had been under the consuls; although, from the alteration in the condition and character of the people, the substance had changed from an irregular democracy to a military despotism. The Spanish constitution, in its present form, will probably never have a fair trial; and will doubtless undergo many important alterations, before the government assumes a settled and permanent shape. The intervening troubles through which the country may pass, will perhaps be ascribed, by superficial observers, to the defects of the constitution, as they were in France, while, in reality, the cause of them in both cases must be looked for in the difficulties of the crisis.

The establishment of the Cortes, in the form of a single assembly, is regarded by many of the friends of liberty as a very unfortunate arrangement. But this objection, founded in a great

measure on an erroneous theory of the British constitution, has, in my opinion, very little weight. It supposes that the existence of an established aristocracy is a point of great importance. But even admitting the correctness of this idea, which might however be contested on various grounds, it may be asked with pertinence, whether the security of the aristocracy depends upon their being shut up in a separate room, to deliberate on the public affairs; whether like cyphers, in notation, they are personally insignificant, and only acquire importance by their local position; whether their political weight does not depend, on the contrary, upon their property; whether, as long as they retain their property, they will not also retain their influence; and whether to form a part of the same legislative assembly is not the most favourable position in which they can be placed for exercising the influence their property gives them, while they retain it, over their supposed enemies.

The king's prerogative is also said to be too much restricted; but this objection is not better founded than the other. In a constitutional monarchy, the appointment of the ministers is the only function which the king can really exercise; and this is attributed to him in Spain.

In one or two points of smaller importance, it would perhaps be possible to discover some real

defects. There is an evident incongruity in the right granted to the Cortes of summoning the king's ministers to appear before them, and give an account of the progress of public affairs. In a constitutional monarchy, the ministers are responsible, as citizens, for their official conduct, and may be brought before the regular tribunals for any part of it; but, as ministers in the exercise of their functions, they are the king's agents, and have no account to render but to him. The information sometimes given by the British ministry in parliament, is regarded as a matter of courtesy; and, when asked, is granted or refused at discretion. Another objectionable feature of more importance, is the provision which makes the members of the existing Cortes ineligible for the succeeding one. The inconveniences of this regulation are sufficiently obvious; and are felt so strongly in Spain at the present moment, that every effort is now making to induce the king to summon an extraordinary session of the Cortes, after which the members are again eligible.

The essential excellence of the Spanish constitution, the quality that makes it dear to the friends of liberty, and odious to the partisans of arbitrary power, is its honesty. It is what it professes to be, a real representative government; and is not, like some others that bear the name, a mere mockery and pageant, more displeasing to an inde-

pendent mind than tyranny in a plain unsophisticated shape, because insulting as well as oppressive.

2. The most interesting aspect under which the Spanish and Portuguese revolutions present themselves to the citizens of the United States, I may say indeed to the world at large, is that under which they are considered as affecting the condition of the American colonies. No doubt can be entertained that the complete emancipation of these vast regions will be effected at no great distance of time; and the simultaneous erection of these hitherto insignificant settlements into eight or ten independent and powerful nations may well be considered as one of the most extraordinary and interesting events that ever occurred. It can hardly fail, when its consequences shall be fully developed, to give an entirely new face to the political and commercial affairs of the world.

The struggle for independence in the Spanish colonies has been precipitated by the convulsions in the mother country, and is not, like our revolution, a spontaneous effort, resulting from an internal consciousness of capacity for self-government. This is the most unfavourable circumstance attending it. It is this cause which draws out the contest into such a weary length; and which, after the formal emancipation shall be effected, may very probably entail upon these countries a long period of anarchy and discord. A spontaneous effort for freedom implies the possession of intellec-

tual and physical resources, sufficient to secure the object with ease, and to improve it to the best advantage. A colony, thus emancipated, is like a ripe fruit, that drops from its parent tree at the moment of full maturity, and springs up naturally into a new and vigorous plant. The freedom of South America is a premature birth. It does not proceed from the healthy action of nature, operating within at the proper time; but has been forced upon the colonies by accidents occurring abroad. Considered as a rebellion against the Spanish government, it is just, if any enterprise ever deserved that qualification, and would have been, at whatever period it might have happened. No society was probably ever subject to a more intolerable and revolting system of misgovernment: and it is impossible to deny the right of resistance under such circumstances, without denying completely the inherent and universal right of self-defence against injustice and oppression. But considered as a measure intended to promote the happiness of the South Americans, the revolution presents itself in a less favourable point of view, and might probably have been delayed with great advantage for two or three centuries. The Americans, however, are not to bear the blame of this precipitation. They have been subjected to the action of political forces, over which they had no control. A revolution, however premature, was the necessary result of the circumstances in which

they were placed; and although its aspect may, for some time, present many features not very consonant with just notions of liberty, still the friends of humanity must wish for its success, and are bound, by all suitable means, to promote it.

The policy which may be adopted by the Spanish government in regard to their colonies, is still uncertain; and in the period of trouble and confusion that may very probably occur at home, the possessions abroad must be left, in a great measure, to themselves. At present, the plans under consideration contemplate the establishment of constitutional governments, nominally subject to Spain, and administered on the spot by princes of the royal family. If the mother country had the power to enforce this arrangement, it might, perhaps, be as favourable to the ultimate well-being of the colonies, as their immediate emancipation. But this is not the case: and after struggling as they have done for independence for ten or twelve years, it can hardly be expected that they will abandon the prize of their own accord, at the very moment of success. It is therefore much to be wished in the interest of humanity, of the colonies, and of Spain herself, that she may abstain from any farther wanton waste of resources and life, and submit with a good grace to the decree of necessity. She will probably find, as England did, the emancipation of her colonies infinitely more profitable to her than their possession; and, in exchange

for the vain name of ruling the Indies, will find the wealth of the Indies pouring into her territories in a fertilizing shower, instead of merely rolling through it, as it now does, like a mountain torrent, and leaving no marks of its passage, but barrenness and desolation.

CHAP. IV.

ITALY AND GREECE.

The late events in Italy are like those in Spain, too recent and too notorious to require particular mention in so general a sketch as this. The friends of liberty were disappointed by the feeble resistance which the Neapolitans opposed to the invasion of Austria. No doubt the cause was betrayed by some of the principal pretended patriots; and this is the best apology that can be offered for the easy discomfiture of the rest. Even this, however, is but a poor excuse; and the shameful defection of so many of the chiefs, proves that the higher classes of society in Italy are as corrupt and unprincipled, as the mass of the people are uninformed and wretched. In such a soil it may well be doubted whether rational liberty and the institutions fitted to secure it, will ever be a spontaneous growth.

> Que peut-on au milieu de ce peuple abattu?
> Benjamin est sans force, et Juda sans vertu.

Nevertheless, as the spirit of political improvement gains ground in Europe, it will probably exercise a beneficial influence upon the character of the Italians, as well as upon the policy and disposition of the cabinets which have recently suc-

ceeded in foiling their attempts; and the ability to organise a better system at home will grow up, in the gradual progress of events, under the operation of causes which may be expected at the same time to remove the hostility of foreign powers to its establishment.

The unjust interference of these powers has, however, after all, in this as on former occasions been the real cause which has checked the efforts of the Italians, and entailed upon them a continuance of all the evils under which they labour. It is true that a long course of misgovernment and oppression has depraved, in a great measure, the whole frame of society;—but, as was observed in regard to Spain, the stability and vigour of the established institutions has been sapped to an equal or greater degree. We see this plainly enough in their utter incapacity, through the whole extent of Italy, to execute the first and most indispensable function that devolves upon governments—that of protecting the property and persons of the citizens from violence. Hence, although the movement in a better direction might at first be feeble, the resistance of the governments would be feebler still; and the slightest force could hardly fail to overcome it, as happened in fact at Naples. Thus if the country were left to itself, it would find, in the state of degradation and decay to which it had sunk, the antidote as well as the poison;—and the people would have had the opportunity of acquiring in-

formation respecting the principles of good government in the practical school of experience, — the only one in which they can be studied with effect. They might have fallen into errors or committed excesses at the beginning, but would finally have worked out their own salvation, had they not been stopped short in their progress, and condemned to another period of hopeless oppression, by the interference of the Christian allies.

It is difficult to speak of the proceedings of these allies in regard to Italy with the moderation which usage has appropriated to the discussion of public measures and characters. Precisely similar, in their essential features, to the aggressions of Bonaparte, and to the partition of Poland by the same powers, they are yet more odious than either, because they are masked by hypocritical pretences of religion and justice. The Austrian government, incapable of alleging even the possibility of actual danger from the revolution at Naples, was compelled to seek a pretext for invasion in the supposed irregularity of the manner in which it was effected. It was the work of secret societies and a revolted army. What then? Was it for Austria to regulate the manner in which the people of the Sicilies should reform their institutions? But mark the impudence of these pretences. Secret societies and revolted troops were the great machines employed by the German powers, and Austria among the rest, in shaking off the yoke of

Napoleon. Not only so; but this very society of *Colliers*, which is denounced as seditious and impious, was founded under the patronage and encouragement of the allied powers, and for objects precisely similar to those for which it has now been employed. Is it admissible for powers which respect either the public or themselves, to insult, in this way, common sense and consistency, by denouncing their own proceedings as criminal, when imitated by others, and condemning, as treasonable, institutions of their own foundation? If we even wave all these considerations, and state the language of the allies in the form most favourable to them, it would amount to this: You are pursuing an object which we think injurious; you have adopted one political system, and we another; we will force ours upon you at the point of the bayonet. Shame itself ought to have arrested them in such a project, when they remembered that their only pretext for the long wars they had waged against the French revolution, was the disposition shown by France to force her political systems upon other nations — systems at least as plausible as that of the allies, and maintained by those who propagated them with at least as much honesty. The conduct of the French convention, in this particular, is denounced by Martens as *monstrous;* but circumstances alter cases; and this worthy publicist, in his capacity of member of the German Diet, would probably have applied a much

milder epithet to the invasion of Naples by the allies under the same pretences. It affords some consolation to the regret which must be felt by the friends of liberty for the success of such proceedings, to find them reprobated in all the civilized parts of the Christian world, with a more general consent of the public voice, than has been applied to any measure since the partition of Poland.

Thus all the arguments which could have been employed by the allies to justify their invasion of Italy, had been completely refuted in advance by the whole tenour of their language and conduct for thirty years past. They have since been refuted in another form by their policy in regard to the Greeks, which may be looked upon as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the doctrine of *legitimacy*. A horde of wandering barbarians carry fire and sword through the fairest region in Christendom, and succeed in subverting its government. They are the common enemies of Europe; and have repeatedly attempted to spread their desolating dominion over the rest of it. Nothing but want of power prevents them; and instead of acquiring civilization from residing in the neighbourhood of Christian countries, they have given, at the very moment when the allies were deliberating upon the subject, more horrid proofs of barbarism and cruelty than appear in any part of their previous history. The nation that groans under their yoke, and is now making a probably fruitless effort to

shake it off, is, on the contrary, in itself one of the most estimable branches of the European family, and is especially dear and interesting to all the rest, as the intellectual parent, to which they are indebted for their present superiority over the other parts of the world. Here, then, since the allies have established the doctrine of interference, was a cause in which it might have been applied with general approbation. I venture to say, there is not a heart in Christendom, unconnected with this Holy League, that would not have swelled with ecstasy at the emancipation of Greece and the return of freedom and civilization to the country from which they sprung. No doubt there is some illusion in this enthusiasm; but it is an illusion which every generous mind is proud to indulge, and which comes in aid of the incontestible claims of natural justice. Here, then, the allies might at once have proved their honesty, and have done something to redeem their popularity. But no; the Grand Turk is, it seems, legitimate; and the execution of the patriarchs in cold blood requires no atonement, calls for no interference, when done in the name of legitimacy; while the introduction of the most important improvements in administration into a country which is perishing for want of them, is a sacrilegious and treasonable enterprise, that must be crushed by open force, because it bears the name of revolution. Instead of interfering in favour of the Greeks, the allies

have, on the contrary, done every thing to discourage them, short of an absolute military alliance with the Turk. In reality, it is their policy, according to the shortsighted and mistaken view they are accustomed to take of it, to frown upon this enterprise. The establishment of a powerful government, administered on liberal principles, in their immediate neighbourhood, is not a pleasant thought to these iron despots; and a constitutional Greek empire would be a still less agreeable object of contemplation than a constitutional kingdom in Italy. Instead of favouring the erection of these fine countries into an independent state, it suits their purposes much better to leave them as they are, till the proper period arrives for taking them into their own hands, — a measure for which a sufficient pretext will never be long wanting in the conduct of such a government as Turkey.

All the accounts from the theatre of this struggle, are so contradictory and uncertain, that it is impossible to form an opinion upon its present state, or probable result. It would appear that the Greeks have been successful in the Peninsula, and on the islands; and that they have the command of the sea. If they have really gained these advantages, it will be hardly possible for the Turks to recover them, should they even maintain themselves in the provinces along the Danube; and we may venture to indulge a hope that, at least, the proper territory of ancient Greece, the scene of so

much greatness and glory in former times, will now resume its political independence. This would at once relieve the most numerous and civilized portion of the Christian subjects of Turkey from that detestable yoke, and would furnish a rallying point for the future efforts of the rest. The day, it may be hoped, is not now very far remote when the civilization of Europe will over-flow its present limits, and carry wealth and happiness through the whole of those delightful, but desolate, regions that embosom the Mediterranean. Could the Christian powers but act together for good, with as much cordiality as they often do for evil, the regeneration of these countries might be accomplished almost without an effort. The expense which has lately been so miserably employed in crushing the liberal institutions of Naples, would, under such circumstances, have been sufficient to establish them in every part of the domains of Islamism.

CHAP. V.

GERMANY, INCLUDING AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.

It is one of the anomalies in the political constitution of the German confederacy, that it comprehends several powers, which are wholly independent in regard to the government of the greater part of their dominions, and have subjected only a small portion of them to the laws of the union. It would be worse than simplicity, not to see in this arrangement a mere pretext for the interference of England, Austria, and Prussia, in the affairs of Germany proper. These states are nominally members of the league, but really masters of it; and the union, considered in distinction from the independent possessions of the principal members, can hardly be said to enjoy a real political existence. It is fortunate, therefore, for the interests of the smaller states, that its general operation is as feeble as it is unjust; and that it leaves the members, as separate sovereignties, in possession of every thing essential to independence either in form or substance. The interval that has elapsed since the peace of Paris, has been marked in these states by important and interesting events. It has been the epoch of the introduction of repre-

sentative government. This important revolution has been effected without bloodshed, or violence, under the influence of an enlightened public opinion, and with the free consent of the sovereigns of these countries; some of whom have distinguished themselves by a truly liberal and magnanimous spirit. Such events are sufficiently curious to merit particular attention; and as they had not perhaps, at the time of their occurrence, the immediate notoriety which belongs almost exclusively to military transactions, some notice of them in detail may not be wholly superfluous. This will form the principal subject of the present section. As the history of the confederacy is intimately connected with that of the separate representative governments, it will be necessary to commence by stating some of its principal points. It is only in this part of the subject that I shall have occasion to touch upon the affairs of Austria, which has not been the theatre of any important domestic occurrences. Those of Prussia will require particular attention, not only in their connection with the league, but from the interesting nature of the discussions in that kingdom in regard to the new constitution, which has been so long in preparation, and so frequently promised.

At the close of the war, the principal powers of Europe, and most of the inferior ones, fell, by the mere operation of the change of circumstances, into a settled and easy position. But there re-

mained in the centre of this great body politic a mass of territorial and political interests, which, by the effect of repeated revolutions and counter-revolutions, had been thrown at last into a state of complete chaos. The principal of these interests, were those connected in different ways with the German states. To adjust them on the broad principles of natural justice might not have been extremely difficult; but it was necessary to reconcile, and satisfy, as far as possible, individual pretensions of the most various and opposite characters, infinite in number and boundless in extent. There were the great states demanding indemnity and increase of power; and the small ones insisting on security and independence. There were the secularised clergy, and the mediatised nobles, clamouring for a restoration of their exclusive privileges, and confiscated property: emperors obstinately refusing the hereditary right to be elected; and electors bent upon resuming the right of choice, whether there were any body to be chosen or not. * There was a confusion of the greatest and the smallest interests, requiring to be settled at the same time, a vast confederacy to be organised, and the balance of power in Europe to be secured; while the antichambers of the congress were be-

* The Elector of Hesse actually retained this title, and his successor has, in like manner, assumed it at his father's death.

sieged by the representations of a thousand private concerns, down to those of the very mechanical trades. Besides all these, and though last, it is to be hoped, not considered as absolutely least in importance, was the interest of the people, the public good, which could not be wholly overlooked, though unfortunately it was found impossible to make it the first and principal object of attention. To introduce something like a principle of order into this scene of wild confusion, was the most difficult task that devolved upon the congress; and the accomplishment of it, even to the imperfect extent to which it has been effected, was assisted very much, if not wholly produced, by accidental events.

The Holy Roman Empire had disappeared; the Emperor had abdicated his dignity; and the confederation of the Rhine, which succeeded, had sunk into nothing. The first question, therefore, in regard to Germany, was to fix upon some general principle of reorganization. Shall the states into which it is divided be left unconnected and independent? If not, shall the old empire be restored, or shall a new general system be established? If the latter, what shall be its principles; and shall it resemble most nearly the constitution of the empire, or that of the Rhenish confederation? Had these questions been decided on grounds of mere expediency, and regard to the public good, it would probably have appeared very

clear, either that the idea of a general system should be entirely abandoned, or that the new government should be much more consolidated than either of the former leagues. A federal system, which acts merely upon the sovereign states that compose it, and has no operation upon individuals, has been ascertained by experience to be worse than useless. In proof of this remark, if its correctness were doubtful, might be quoted the examples of the republic of the Netherlands, and of the old confederation of the United States of America: but that of the German empire was still more striking than either, and was quite sufficient for the decision of the question. The only way therefore in which the new system could have been made really efficient, would have been to establish a consolidated government, acting directly upon individuals, and exercising exclusively the functions of general sovereignty; while the separate states retained their power merely for municipal purposes, as with us. The foundation of such a system in the centre of Europe, had it been possible, would have done more than any thing for the security of the public tranquillity. A confederacy of this kind, though strong for all useful objects, is in its nature pacific and unambitious; and could not of itself have caused any alarm; while it would have interposed the best barrier between the two great sections of the European commonwealth, which, under the present arrangement, will pro-

bably sooner or later come into collision. But the obstacles to the establishment of such a system were so great and obvious, that it probably was not even suggested. It would have been necessary, that all the great German powers should incorporate their whole dominions in the union. Thirty or forty hereditary rulers must have surrendered the most important functions of sovereignty; and if the establishment of the present constitution in the United States encountered no small opposition from the offended pride of the states, it may easily be imagined what would be the resistance of these emperors, kings, and princes, the least of whom would think the order of the universe in danger if he lost the bauble he calls his crown. The idea was wholly inadmissible, and, in reality, was never suggested.

The next best plan to this would have been to abandon the idea of a general system, at least as far as regarded the participation of Austria and Prussia. A union of the smaller powers might have still been advantageous; and perhaps in this, the principle of consolidation might not have been wholly impracticable; but a league into which Austria, Prussia, and Great Britain entered, whether for the whole or a part of their dominions, was, as far as it produced any effect at all, a mere subjugation of the smaller states under another name. Such a system would be vicious as regarded them, precisely in the same degree in

which it was good in itself; because the more efficient it was, the more efficient an engine was in operation for the destruction of their political existence. This consideration was too obvious to have been overlooked by the great powers, had their views been steadily directed to the promotion of the public good. But there were other objects which touched them more nearly. Each of them naturally aimed, in the first place, to secure and augment, as far as it might be, its own political importance. Other and more general objects could only be treated in subordination to this. It was natural, therefore, that they should desire, without sacrificing their own independence, to secure a sort of political guardianship over the inferior German states. The establishment of such a system as would best promote this object, and not the general tranquillity, or the public good, was the real problem to be solved in the settlement of Germany. The whole affair was another representation of the drama of the partition of Poland, in a more specious and plausible shape. The interest of the inhabitants of these states, of the states themselves as sovereignties, and the public good, were sacrificed to the ambition of the great powers. In order to effect the object they had in view, the first step was to organize a confederacy. This measure was accordingly resolved upon previously to the Treaty of Paris, and is stipulated by one of its articles. The next

step on the part of the great powers, was to reserve, by their own act, the complete independence of the greater proportion of their dominions, while only a smaller section of them was incorporated in the league. Having thus virtually retired from the union for the purpose of obedience, while they entered it for that of authority, their third, and last object, was to extend this authority as much as possible, by increasing, as far as they could, the efficiency of the union. Of these three objects, the first and second were obtained without difficulty, and without consultation with the smaller powers. Their success in the third depended upon the form in which the details of the confederacy should be arranged. This business had been referred to the Congress of Vienna. The smaller members of the union naturally insisted upon expressing their opinions, and at this point the great powers met with serious and effectual opposition.

The arrangement in detail of the forms of the union, the establishment of which had been resolved upon at Paris, was undertaken at the congress by the five royal powers, viz. Austria, Prussia, Great Britain in the name of Hanover, which was erected into a kingdom for this purpose, Bavaria, and Wurtemberg. None of the other states which were to compose the league, were allowed to concur in the deliberations upon the subject. In this way the great powers secured a

majority of voices in the council, which would otherwise have been against them; but the interest of the smaller ones was powerfully supported by Bavaria and Wurtemberg, which belonged to this party. Through the whole of the discussions, the language of the three great powers displayed a singular, and most edifying, liberality. The establishment of representative constitutions and the guarantee of individual rights by the confederation, were the topics upon which they principally insisted. The plans of union presented by Prussia, contemplated the complete security to every German of his personal rights, including specifically the liberty of the press. "Hanover," said count Munster, "can never admit that princes have despotic rights over their subjects; or that the states composing the late Confederation of the Rhine, obtained by that union rights over their subjects which they did not possess before." Prince Metternich himself caught the infection of liberality, and observed, that, in modern times nobody pretended to claim despotic power; although it would, perhaps, require rather a nice distinction between despotic and unlimited governments, to exclude the Austrian empire from the former category. With equal zeal they urged the adoption of representative constitutions, under the guarantee of the union. These propositions were excellent in themselves; but, as they formed rather an extraordinary contrast with the habitual

policy of the powers that presented them, and as these powers, especially Austria, showed no disposition to extend the great benefits which were to result from their adoption to their own subjects, the smaller states naturally looked upon them with suspicion: *Timeo Danaos.* In fact it required less sagacity than is generally exercised by states and individuals in securing their immediate interest, to perceive that the guarantee of individual rights, and of representative constitutions by the union, had no other practical operation except to augment the influence of the great powers who had withdrawn from the union for every purpose but this, over the smaller ones. The latter accordingly opposed these propositions with vigour and perseverance. This opposition cannot be attributed to a want of liberality in the governments of the smaller states, because they have since, of their own accord, introduced at home representative constitutions of a highly liberal character; while the great partisans of liberal institutions at the congress have carefully abstained from acting upon their own propositions, even to the limited extent in which they were finally adopted. The great powers also urged the adoption of an efficient judiciary system, to decide between the members of the union, and give it more efficacy and consolidation. This proposition was good in itself, but was objectionable on the same ground as the others, and was in consequence resisted. They

even went so far as to propose a prohibition on the members of the union to make or conclude treaties; but this idea was found so unpalatable, that it was not much insisted on. The pretensions of the conflicting parties were urged on both sides with heat and violence. The great powers were probably determined to carry their points at last by main force, if they could not do it in any other way; and the smaller ones to resist every argument but that of the bayonet. After two or three months of fruitless attempts at negociation, the subject was abandoned for the time, and the king of Wurtemberg, the most active member of the party of the small states, quitted Vienna in disgust, and returned to his capital.

Meanwhile the inferior states which had been excluded from the royal council had not been inactive. They had formed an association of their own, including powers no less respectable than the Grand Duke of Luxemburg (king of the Netherlands), and the Grand Duke of Baden, with thirty or forty others of various degrees of importance. This association was continually importuning the royal council for permission to concur in the deliberations upon this subject; and as constantly received the answer that the period had not yet arrived in which their assistance would be useful. Thus, in addition to other subjects of contention, the affairs of Germany alone had nearly led to a new war, when the occurrence of a for-

tunate accident smoothed every difficulty, and settled the conflicting claims in a moment. This event was no other than the return of Buonaparte from Elba; and it is to his kind assistance that the Germans are indebted for their present confederacy; as it was under his patronage, that the sovereigns were able to make head against the French revolution. The arrival of this great pacificator put a new face at once upon the state of the negociations. The association of inferior powers were informed immediately, that the period had arrived in which their presence in the royal council would be useful; the propositions most obnoxious to the smaller states were abandoned entirely; the subjects of individual rights, of representative constitutions, and of the judiciary, were settled substantially in accordance with their views; and the whole business was closed before the battle of Waterloo. The king of Wurtemberg alone held out some time longer, but finally came in upon the same terms as the rest.

Such were the circumstances under which the German confederacy was organized; and it might be observed of this constitution with truth, as was said so unjustly of our own by a distinguished statesman, then labouring under the influence of false theories and groundless terrors, that it was born a cripple. In fact, the comparatively short period, during which it has been in operation, has fully proved both its utter inefficacy for any useful ob-

ject, and the dictatorial ascendancy which it gives to the great powers over the small ones. From the time when the Diet commenced its session, till the meeting of ministers at Carlsbad, although a press of the most important business was of course before this assembly at the first settlement of an entirely new government, it had done absolutely nothing. The subject first taken up, which was the military organization of the confederacy, was still upon the *tapis*, and no considerable progress had been made in it. At this period, it was thought necessary by the greater powers to employ the diet as an engine for imposing the most odious restrictions upon the personal rights of the subjects of the smaller ones; and in doing this, they did not deem it important to save to the diet even the appearance of independence. The resolutions which the assembly was to sanction, were, in reality, not even submitted to its consideration. The subjects were discussed, and the decisions were taken, at Carlsbad. In order to give them a binding force as laws of the union, it was necessary that they should in form be voted in the diet. They were accordingly proposed by the minister of Austria, the permanent president of this assembly, and agreed to unanimously the same day; the diet thus condescending to act the part of the parliaments of France under the old *regime*, without even exhibiting the reluctance which was generally found in that body to register unjust and

obnoxious edicts. Thus the German congress which had slept at its post for about four years at a very critical epoch, and not effected a single object, now prostrated the liberty of the press through the whole confederation, withdrew political offenders from their natural judges, and subjected them to an inquisitorial tribunal at Mentz, and established an inspection over all the universities, besides other regulations of still more permanent importance, though not so much immediate interest, in a single day. After this extraordinary despatch of business, the members probably assisted with a good relish at the banquet, given, the same evening, by the minister president, in celebration of their achievements. The celerity with which these affairs were settled, could only be paralleled by the singular vagueness of the authority under which the diet pretended to act: the provision which was supposed to confer it, being the second article of the act of confederation, which corresponds with the preamble of our constitution, and states, in general terms, that the object of the union is to promote the public good. * Fatigued with so unusual an effort, the diet immediately relapsed into its former stupor, and will probably

* The second article *in extenso* is as follows: The object of this confederacy is to maintain the security of Germany from within and from without, and the independence and inviolability of the several states.

remain in the same quiescent state, until Austria shall present another edict to be registered.

Now my weary lips I close,
Leave me, leave me, to repose.

If the general constitution of the German confederacy is far from being an agreeable subject of observation to the friends of liberty and good government, there is something proportionally pleasant in the contemplation of the new political institutions of the separate members of the union. Representative constitutions are now established in all the states, excepting one or two of the smallest, and the two most important, Austria and Prussia. These constitutions resemble each other for the most part in their details; and though it might be easy to point out many particulars in which their forms could be improved, their practical operation has shown that they are all animated by the real spirit of representative government. Where this is the case, minute forms are, in a great measure, indifferent. In all, the publicity of the operations of government, one of the greatest advantages of the representative over other forms, is completely secured, excepting in Hanover, where the proceedings in the States-General are secret. This exception is rather remarkable, considering that the constitution of Hanover was organized by the government which has long been regarded as the most liberal in Europe. The fact

would seem to argue that there is some discordance between the spirit of the British constitution, and that of the British ministry. I shall add a few remarks upon the most considerable of these new governments, according to the order of time in which they were established.

In consequence of the resistance of the smaller powers to the guarantee of representative constitutions by the confederacy, the article which was finally adopted was couched in the most general terms, and really bound the members to nothing. It may be translated literally as follows: *A constitution of states will find a place in every part of the union* (In allen bundes-staaten wird eine landständische verfassung statt finden). The simple future form *will find a place* (wird statt finden) had been substituted at the special instance of the Bavarian ministers for the imperative phraseology *shall be established* (soll bestehen) which was employed in the first draught, and this reform in the language of the article precluded, of itself, all idea of obligation. Besides this, the phrase *constitution of states* is so vague, that it may be made to mean any thing: and although the "*states of the country*" (landstände) is the term employed in Germany to designate the representation of the people under the new constitutions, it was also the name of the feudal assemblies of ancient times. Accordingly the Austrian government have considered the obligation of the article, whatever it might be, as

satisfied in regard to such of their dominions as form a part of the union, by the existence of the feudal estates, which are still continued, and which assemble only one day in the year for the purpose of registering the financial edicts of the ministry. It is evident, therefore, that whatever was done in favour of liberal political institutions, was the result of the free will of the sovereigns, or of the influence of public opinion, and not a compliance with the requisitions of the act of confederacy. This idea is still more fully confirmed by the fact that the governments which had opposed this article at the congress were the first to establish representative constitutions, and that those who had urged it most warmly have taken no steps whatever for this purpose.

1. The king of Bavaria, as early as the year 1808, had reformed the administration of his dominions, and had given a public promise to introduce a representative assembly. To suppose, as some have done, that his opposition, in regard to this subject at the congress arose from a disinclination to popular government, would be to place him in contradiction with the whole of his preceding, as well as his subsequent conduct. In fact, Count Montgelas, the minister who had enjoyed the king's confidence ever since the commencement of his reign, and till very lately was at the head of the administration, is a statesman of acknowledged liberality; and the great object of

his policy had uniformly been to accommodate the institutions of the country to the modern improvements in political science. Among other proofs of this spirit may be mentioned the encouragement given to our illustrious countryman, Count Rumford. This minister, however, had been charged with being under French influence during the reign of Buonaparte, probably on no better ground than that the political interest of Bavaria coincided at the time with that of France; as it also did before the Revolution, and must always do whenever France possesses her proper weight in the European balance of power. Under this pretext, but really on account of the liberality of his political principles, M. de Montgelas became obnoxious to the German aristocracy after the fall of Napoleon, and they exerted their influence against him with the king. In consequence of this circumstance he was not employed at the Congress of Vienna, although he had been named for that business, but was replaced by General Wrede. Subsequently to the congress he has wholly retired from the administration of public affairs, but is still said to enjoy the king's personal confidence. The coincidence in time of the retirement of this minister, and of the publication of the constitution, induced some persons, who were probably unacquainted with his character, to suppose that he had been averse to this measure, and that his retirement was the signal of the prevalence of constitutional

opinions in the cabinet. But this supposition is contradicted by the whole tenor of his policy; and although the immediate causes of his retirement are not known, yet, as he is understood to retain his influence with the king, there is every reason to suppose that it was unconnected with this subject, and that the constitution is in reality his work, or that of his political friends in the cabinet.

However this may be, it is certain that the preparations for the introduction of a representative government, which had been interrupted by political events, were resumed in 1814; and on the 26th of May 1818, the constitution was published by a royal proclamation. The parliament, according to this constitution, is composed of two houses. The first comprehends the princes of the royal family, the great officers of state, the two archbishops, one bishop, named by the king, and the president of the Protestant Consistory for the time being, all of whom are members by virtue of their functions and official character. Besides these, the mediatised nobles holding estates in Bavaria are entitled to an hereditary seat in this chamber, and the king may give a personal or hereditary right to the same privilege to such other individuals as he may think proper, under some restrictions. The members of the first chamber are called counsellors of the realm (Reichsräthe.) The second chamber is composed of deputies from the body of

the people in the ratio of one to 7000 families, and they are allotted to the different classes of society in the following proportion: one quarter to the privileged or noble proprietors and the clergy of the two religions, one quarter to the cities and market towns, and the other half to the proprietors in general. The three universities send one member each. The deputies from the cities are named by the municipal authorities, and those from the country by the judicial and other magistrates under various restrictions, and with the observation of complicated forms. This system is far from corresponding in theory with the idea of a real representative government; but its practical operation has shown that the house of deputies, thus chosen, is animated by a truly popular spirit; and this example tends, with others, to establish the principle that forms of election are in a great measure indifferent.

The assembly of the chambers was opened on the 1st of January 1819. On that day was heard, for the first time, at least for several centuries past, within the limits of Germany, the sound of public debate upon legislative measures. The House of Deputies was true to its mission, and supported the popular cause with great zeal and ability. The deputies from the universities distinguished themselves particularly by the liberality of their opinions, as well as by superior talents and eloquence; the German universities in general being, as is well

known, not less remarkable for their attachment to popular principles than the British have always been for determined loyalty. The sounds of economy and retrenchment, rarely very pleasing to royal and princely ears, were pronounced with distinctness and energy; reforms in the military department were more especially insisted on; and after the discussions upon these subjects had continued for three or four months, the chambers were finally prorogued by the government in no very agreeable temper, and before any considerable portion of the business had been despatched. As the regular assembly of the states happens according to the constitution only once in three years, there has been no meeting since. The aristocratic party is very powerful in Bavaria, as in all the rest of Germany, and was ready to profit by any imprudence or excess of zeal in the popular leaders; and in these discussions it is not improbable that the latter, for want of experience in the management of business, may have fallen into some errors. It would lead me too far to undertake an examination in detail of the points in dispute. It does not appear, however, that the disposition of the government to uphold the constitution has been diminished by this rather unfavourable result of the first trial of it. It is understood, on the contrary, that in the ministerial conferences at Vienna in 1820, the great German powers urged very strongly the adoption of certain modifications of

the constitutions already established; among which would probably have been a prohibition to publish the debates in the House of Deputies; but that the Bavarian government, as well as those of Baden and Wurtemberg, resisted the proposal with firmness and effect. In consequence of this and some other circumstances, it is highly probable that the next session of the Bavarian States, at the beginning of the year 1822, will pass off with greater harmony and success than the first.

2. The Grand Duke of Baden was the next of the German sovereigns who granted to his subjects a representative constitution. He appears to have been determined to take this step in part by accidental circumstances, although it would be unjust not to recognise in the general tenor of his proceedings, undoubted proofs of a really liberal spirit. Upon the accession of Bavaria to the great alliance in 1813, the Austrian territories which had been incorporated into that kingdom were reclaimed; but as the assistance of Bavaria, the most considerable of the secondary German States, was regarded as of great importance, at a moment when the final result of the struggle was still doubtful, it was stipulated by Austria in a separate treaty, and the stipulation was afterwards guaranteed by all the powers, that Bavaria should receive a complete indemnity for the losses thus sustained, in territory contiguous to its own. The territory was also specifically designated, and belonged for the most

part to the Grand Duke of Baden, who had not yet come into the alliance, and who, from his family connection with Napoleon, had been drawn into intimate relations with him, and was considered as more attached to his policy than any other German prince. Besides the cession of some other portions of Baden, it was agreed that upon the extinction of the direct grand ducal line, which was expected to happen shortly, the Palatinate should revert immediately to Bavaria. The Grand Duke of Baden had not been consulted in regard to these arrangements, and his dominions were thus disposed of without his consent, although he, like the rest of the German princes, acceded shortly after to the alliance. Upon the general settlement of claims, the king of Bavaria, who had been obliged to satisfy at once the demands of his imperial neighbour, called loudly for his indemnities from Baden; and the Grand Duke of Baden complained as loudly of the infraction of public law and justice, not to say brotherly kindness, in this disposition of his dominions without his knowledge. A public correspondence passed between these distinguished brothers, in which the duke appeals to the equity and affection of the king, and the king replies in substance that equity and affection have no concern with matters of state. As this remark, practically speaking, is pretty well founded, it is not likely that either of these topics would have greatly assisted the Grand Duke's argument; but fortunately for him he had a second brother in the

north, commanding a peace establishment of 800,000 bayonets, and who. was consequently in a situation to urge in his favour the only considerations, which in these matters are of great and acknowledged importance. Under the influence of the Emperor of Russia, the Grand Duke of Baden's dominions were protected from dismemberment, and the claim of Bavaria for indemnity was referred to the territorial commission then sitting at Frankfort. This commission afterwards made a proposition to Bavaria, which was rejected as unsatisfactory, and the claim was then annulled. Such was the termination of this affair, which illustrates very curiously several important points in the present state of European politics considered as a practical science.

Meanwhile the Grand Duke of Baden, during the progress of the negotiations, was employing such means, as appeared suitable, to consolidate his dominions, and confirm the tenure by which he held them. To provide against the eventual failure of the direct ducal line, he published, in 1817, an edict, by which he called to the succession his uncles, the Counts of Hochberg, a collateral and hardly legitimate branch of the reigning family. He had already in the course of the preceding year made a public promise to his subjects of a representative government, partly no doubt with a view of gaining their affections, and interesting them in his cause; and on the 22d of March 1818, he actually published the present constitution, which

formally guaranteed the new settlement of the succession. The validity of this settlement would, however, probably have been contested by the great states; but the powerful support of the Emperor of Russia smoothed all difficulties, and the new constitution, including the settlement, was accepted and guaranteed by the Diet. The Grand Duke actually died the same year, and the collateral line succeeded without opposition. These were the auspices under which the representative system was introduced in Baden.

The constitution resembles in its general construction that of Bavaria, but in some important points is more favourable to popular rights, especially in the extension given to the elective franchise. Every individual of mature age is entitled to vote in the choice of deputies. The first meeting of the chambers was held in 1819. The House of Deputies exhibited the same independent and truly popular character as in Bavaria; and the government, offended at the zeal with which they laboured to introduce more economy in the administration, closed the session suddenly in the midst of their labours, and before they had even finished the settlement of the finances. In a really constitutional government such a measure would have brought the machine of state to a stand; as the taxes, not having been voted in the chamber, could not be legally collected. But the executive authority supplied this defect by an arbitrary extension of its proper functions, and the taxes were

continued by an edict on the same footing as before. By a still more extraordinary assumption of authority, an order was issued at the time of the prorogation prohibiting the deputies from holding any communication with their constituents. Another session has however been holden since, in which a better union prevailed among the several branches of the administration; and the government exhibited at the ministerial conferences at Vienna so strong an attachment to the constitution that it has probably conciliated still further the good will of the people.

3. It was reserved for Wurtemberg, after long preliminary struggles, to give the example of a more cordial union between the people and the government, both in the adoption of a constitution, and in the first trial of it, than had been shown before in Germany. This country had, as is well known, maintained in a more perfect form than any other in Europe, excepting England, its ancient constitutions. However vicious in theory, they were yet preferable to the despotism which had succeeded to them elsewhere, and served as an organ for the expression of sounder political ideas than those to which they owed their own existence. When the duchy was erected into a kingdom, and augmented by the addition of considerable territories, governed in a different way, the ancient constitutions were suppressed, and a simple monarchy substituted for them. Arbitrary power was then the order of the day. But after

the fall of Napoleon, the star of liberal ideas was for a short time lord of the ascendant, even in the cabinets. The king of Wurtemberg yielded to its influence with the rest, and he also felt, with the other smaller German states, the necessity of strengthening his authority at home, and of placing himself and his dominions as much as possible under the protection of public opinion for security against the predominance of the great powers. He accordingly assembled the estates of the kingdom in 1815, and laid before them a constitution bottomed on the political notions of the day. This experiment met with small success. As the British parliament in the time of Charles II., after its convocation had been omitted for a number of years, only brought to its next meeting a more determined resolution to assert the rights of the people and bridle the royal prerogative; so the states of Wurtemberg, disgusted at the late arbitrary suppression of their privileges, were but little disposed to accept even favours from so obnoxious a quarter. The constitution was treated as a disguised attack upon their ancient institutions. They did not choose to receive, as a royal grant, the liberties which they conceived themselves to possess by hereditary and prescriptive right. They demanded, on the contrary, a recognition of these rights by the government; and contended that whatever reforms might be necessary in the constitution, should be the result of an agreement between the

government and the states. On the other hand, the mediatised nobles, whose dominions had been incorporated with Wurtemberg, had pretensions of a different kind, equally at variance with the principles of the new constitution, and of the old estates. Such were the embarrassments which attended the first proposal of the constitution. After struggling with them for some time, the government abandoned their plan, and granted, in twelve articles, an acknowledgement of the ancient rights of the states.

At this epoch the late king died, and the present sovereign succeeded under auspices somewhat more favourable for the accomplishment of the work in hand. He was in the first place free from the odium which had attached itself to his father, on account of his arbitrary invasion of the national rights, and he was even absolutely popular from having in the late struggles espoused the party opposed to the court. It is also but justice to observe of the king of Wurtemberg, that throughout his whole proceedings he has shown at once a sincere and honest attachment to the cause of liberty, and a manly elevation of sentiment which is far from being universal with hereditary rulers. He immediately entered upon the unfinished enterprise of the constitution; but such were the essential difficulties that attended it, and the bitterness which had grown out of the late dissensions, that his efforts were not at first more suc-

cessful than those of his father. The twelve articles were expanded into another constitution, which was presented to the States; and as these articles had been considered as the triumph of the opposition party, it was probably supposed that a constitution founded upon them would be looked upon as a compromise, or an instrument agreed upon in common. This result did not happen. The States still adhered to their idea, that the reform must be accomplished by consultation between themselves and the government, and manifested a violent opposition to the new proposal. The king persisted, and after the struggle had been carried on for some time with heat and violence, demanded a categorical answer in eight days. The decision then given was in the negative, and the second constitution was rejected by a large majority; after which the States were dissolved. It may be remarked, that the deputies of the commons acted in these disputes in unison with those of the higher orders, considering themselves as equally interested in the security of their ancient franchises, although their standing under the proposed constitution was probably much more favourable than under the old system. Conscious of the purity of his intentions, and of the sincerity of his attachment to the public liberty, the king determined to appeal from the decision of the States, and to consult the public will, as expressed in a different form. The constitution was submitted to the people in primary

assemblies; and, strange as it may seem, it was again rejected. It is impossible not to recognize in these occurrences the existence of a degree of irritation, which had, in a great measure, blinded the people to the real nature of the controversy. Every thing they contended for, and more, was offered them; but in the heat of party spirit they overlooked the important object in dispute, which was held out to them by the government, and attached themselves exclusively and fanatically to an incidental point of form.

After the failure of this attempt, nothing further was done respecting the constitution for three or four years. The government was probably disgusted with this pertinacious and unreasonable resistance; and at any rate must have deemed it expedient to allow some time for the existing agitation to subside. Meanwhile the cabinet of Wurtemberg was publicly known to be the most liberal of the German governments. At the Diet of Frankfort, in all its negociations with the other powers, its policy was uniformly of this character; a circumstance which could not fail to conciliate the goodwill of the people, and to remove the feelings of heat and irritation which attended the late discussions. In the year 1819 there appeared in Germany a certain degree of popular discontent on political subjects; and there was a disposition manifested in consequence by the greater powers, to restrict, for the present, the establishment of any

more representative governments. The fear that such a resolution might be adopted, probably hastened the period at which the last successful attempt to form a constitution was made in Wurtemberg; and, doubtless, contributed in some degree to smooth the difficulties that had before opposed it. Nothing tends so strongly to conciliate opposing parties, as the apprehension of an attack from a common enemy. A new assembly of the States was summoned early in 1819; and the government, with equal magnanimity and good judgment, avoided at once the principal obstacle, by yielding the point in dispute, which was in reality a mere matter of form. It was agreed that commissioners should be appointed by the king on one side, and by the States on the other, to form a constitution. The concession of the government was received by the States with a corresponding spirit of good temper and conciliation; and the only difficulty of importance being thus removed, the arrangement of the constitution itself was comparatively an easy task. Both parties were equally anxious to lose no time, as the ministers were then assembled at Carlsbad; and every day might bring a prohibition of any further proceedings, which it would have been inconvenient to neglect. Under these circumstances, the business advanced with a very different sort of despatch from that which had appeared on the former occasions: and before the ministerial meeting had been brought to a close, the *constitutional contract* (ver-

fassungs vertrag) between the king and people of Wurtemberg had been solemnly agreed upon, signed, and ratified by both parties. I have been informed, whether correctly or not I cannot affirm with certainty, that a resolution was adopted at Carlsbad, which enjoined upon the king not to proceed any further in a business of such dangerous example; and that the king, receiving information that such a step would probably be taken, pressed the conclusion of this contract with still more earnestness, and took the necessary precautions, in the meantime, to avoid receiving official notice of any such measure, till the affair should be finally settled.

However this may be, this first constitution which ever appeared in a monarchical country in the avowed shape of a *social contract*, was received by the friends of liberty in Germany and Europe with general applause. This point of form is the only circumstance in which it differs very materially from the other German constitutions. The States General are composed of two houses, organized in substance on the same plan as in Bavaria. The first session of this assembly passed off, upon the whole, with great harmony, and was lately closed by the king with a most liberal and patriotic address, in which he expresses the highest satisfaction at the successful issue of their common efforts for the public good. There was, however, one remarkable circumstance attending the first trial of the

new constitution in Wurtemberg, which did not occur either in Bavaria or Baden. The first chamber of the States General is composed, in a great measure, of the mediatised nobles, who are all angry and uneasy at the loss of their privileges; and in this unpleasant frame of mind naturally look with still more jealousy and dislike, than they otherwise would, upon the new constitutions. In Wurtemberg, where they are numerous and powerful, they have refused to take part in the proceedings; and although they are invested by the constitution with the character of members of the first chamber, they have generally declined to accept this quality, and accordingly did not attend the session of the States. In consequence of their absence, a quorum of the upper house could not be obtained. This case, having been anticipated, was provided for by an article in the constitution, which declares, that if either house does not attend in sufficient numbers to debate separately, the members present may sit with the other; and that the acts thus passed shall have the same force as if adopted in both. Thus the resistance of the nobles has given the constitution of Wurtemberg a still more democratic character than it had before, by reducing the States General in practice to a single deliberative assembly.

Such is the general outline of the proceedings in the three most considerable of the German States which have adopted constitutions. That of Ha-

over is regarded as a mere pageant; and has excited neither interest nor attention. Liberal constitutions have been adopted in most of the smaller German States; and the proceedings in almost all these, though comparatively unimportant, are very curious, as well from the inherent interest attached to the subject, as from the great variety of accidental aspects under which it presents itself in the several cases. The want of room makes it necesary to pass them over without notice. The proceedings in Prussia have naturally attracted more general regard, as well from the superior importance of that kingdom in the European commonwealth, as from the singular inconsistency and vacillation of the policy of the cabinet upon this subject. It may be proper therefore to treat of these somewhat more in detail.

4. There is no part of Europe in which the contrast is greater between the form of the government and the state of society than in Prussia, especially the middle and western provinces, which are the most considerable, wealthy, and populous divisions of the monarchy. The government is a military despotism of the purest and most unlimited kind. Some changes have lately been introduced in this respect, as I shall have occasion to mention; but, speaking of Prussia as it existed in the time of Frederic the Great, and since, till within the last ten years, there was not a single intermediate institution, municipal, provincial, or political, between

the king and his subjects. It does not appear that there was even a council of state. Every act of the government emanated from the mere motion and personal good pleasure of one individual. There was also no established religion in Prussia; an institution which, in some forms of arbitrary goverment, as in Turkey, is supposed, perhaps erroneously, to act as a check upon the monarch, and a protector of the people. A general toleration of religions had been introduced by the hardy philosophy of Frederic, at a period when this doctrine was not so readily admitted as it is now; but no sect had any connection whatever with the government. Nevertheless, the kingdom of Prussia was among the most industrious and populous, and by a natural consequence, the most wealthy and, enlightened countries in Europe. None have rendered more essential service to the cause of truth and learning than the Protestant parts of Germany, of which Prussia forms the most extensive, and has been, in this respect, one of the most active sections. From this quarter proceeded the reformers of Christianity, and the less brilliant, though laborious and useful, restorers of ancient literature. At a later period we find these countries taking a high stand in polite learning, and founding a new school of fine writing in poetry and prose, at a time when the rest of Europe had passed, in this department, the period of production. Here too arose, at the same epoch, a new universal philosophy, more remarkable from

the strong sensation it excited, and the important effects it occasioned, than any that has appeared since the time of Aristotle, although the works of its author, like those of the Stagyrite, are deformed by errors and clouded with obscurity. These countries, in short, have long been among the *foci* of European civilization, while the government has preserved the forms that are commonly regarded as suitable to a people in the lowest state of barbarism.

The acquiescence of the nation in this state of things may be accounted for, in part, by the powerful ascendancy of the personal character of the great Frederic, who was himself the living representative and personification of all the philosophy and literature of his time, and whose long and brilliant reign occurred precisely at the period when this dissonance of form and substance might, under other circumstances, have begun to be remarked. Where, by a sort of miracle, the despot is the wisest and best man in his dominions, despotism solves, better than any other imaginable form, the great problem of government, and few will be found to complain of it. This very fact proves the essential vice of the system, since the good it produces only happens by exception, and thus demonstrates the falsehood of the general rule. Besides this circumstance, it may be observed of Prussia and of many other continental States, that the forms of administration are not, as in wholly independent countries,

a mere product and indication of the state of society; but are a compound result of this cause and of the influence of foreign powers, in which civilization is, perhaps, at a very different point. In the western or Rhenish provinces, which were mostly annexed to Prussia by the Congress of Vienna, the contrast I have pointed out was still more remarkable. These provinces were, in other respects, equally civilized and enlightened with the rest; and had, besides, for twenty or thirty years before, been either actually or virtually under the government of France: which, in compensation for other grievances still more grinding and oppressive for the moment, had relieved them, in a great measure, from antiquated abuses, and had introduced new and highly improved forms of administration and of justice, and a code of laws accommodated to the spirit of the age.

But before this annexation, and during the period of depression which followed the disastrous struggle of 1806, a disposition in favour of political reform began to exhibit itself in the Prussian cabinet. The French revolution having assumed the shape of military despotism, it was natural enough that *legitimate* sovereigns should look with more complacency upon liberal ideas. They also found it necessary, in mere self-defence, to increase their resources and strengthen their influence in some way or other. Ancient forms had been found ineffectual, and something else must of course be

adopted. In this emergency, the new political ideas presented themselves as a resource. They were recommended by their popularity, and, under the circumstances, their intrinsic justice was more distinctly felt. The monarchy had hitherto leaned for support upon the titled classes, and had now found this pillar of the state crumbling into dust. Something else must be had to supply the place; and where could aid be looked for but among the people? Community of misfortune, the natural source of mutual kindness and sympathy, had created a bond of union among the different classes of the community. The insolence of the aristocracy was humbled into temporary meekness; and the people looked with pity instead of hatred upon their fallen oppressors. The royal family had always been popular; for the glory of the illustrious Frederic spreads a sort of traditional brightness over the nothingness of his successors: and to this popularity was now added, the interest resulting from the personal qualities of the queen, the most beautiful and interesting woman in her dominions, uniting with all the charms and graces that adorned the queen of France, the domestic virtues which that unhappy princess was accused, perhaps unjustly, of not possessing; and as high-minded as a Roman matron, for she afterwards literally died of grief at the disasters of her country, and the insults heaped upon her person and family by Bonaparte. Such a vision, exhibited in the brilliant light of

royalty, could not fail to be viewed with deep interest by so civilized and feeling a nation. There prevailed, therefore, through the country a general spirit of harmony; and measures of all kinds, ordinary and extraordinary, were resorted to under its influence, or were adopted to encourage it. It was then that the league of virtue (tugend bund) was founded, of which the queen was the patroness, and which became so conspicuous in the last struggle with the power of France. Many important improvements in administration were introduced, corresponding with these principles and feelings; and especially after the appointment of Baron, now Prince Hardenberg, to the post of prime minister, with the title of chancellor. Some late political writers in Germany* have regarded these measures as the result of a premeditated scheme in this minister, to introduce a representative government; and have supposed that they were intended as an accommodation of the state of society and property to such a system. But, supposing the chancellor to have had this idea, it was probably more the result of the circumstances of the times, than of a conviction on general grounds of the necessity of improvement; and therefore does not argue quite

* See the work entitled Die Verwaltung des Staats kanzlers, Fuersten von Hardenberg, Leipsig, 1821. An essay on the administration of the chancellor of state, Prince of Hardenberg. The work was published anonymously, but has since been avowed by Professor Benzenberg of Dusseldorf.

so strongly as these writers seem to imagine, in favor of the probability of the ultimate establishment of a constitution in Prussia, since the circumstances which then existed have changed, and have been succeeded by others, whose immediate influence is of a contrary description.

However this may be, several important innovations were effected in the interval between the campaign which ended with the battle of Jena and the fall of Bonaparte. The experience of that disastrous war sufficiently proved that the nobility, although they monopolized the offices in the army, had not obtained with their titles the hereditary possession of military science, and that they were quite unable to cope with the plebeian warriors of France. The first of the improvements in question was probably the result of this experience; and consisted in breaking down the monopoly of military offices established by Frederic in favor of the nobles, and throwing open all ranks in the army equally to all classes of the people. This was done in 1807. Not long after the abolition of corporal punishment was obtained, though with great difficulty; and in 1813, the new military system was completed by the extension of the duty of military service to all the subjects. By these different regulations the barrier which before separated the army from the people was removed; the nation took the form of a political society, defended by citizen soldiers; and the army was converted from a fighting ma-

chine, into a mass of high-minded and patriotic men. These were large steps in the march of improvement: they were accompanied by others still more considerable.

In 1808, a system of municipal administration was introduced under the direction of Baron Stein. It was founded in popular principles, and gives to the cities the privilege of regulating, independently, their separate interests. This was at once a measure of great utility, and a good preparation for important political improvements in future. The success of our revolution, as far at least as it depended on the exertions of New England, has been ascribed, in a considerable degree, by the best informed judges, to the excellent municipal organization which exists in that part of the United States. The appointment of Prince Hardenberg to the post of chancellor in 1809, was followed by still bolder measures. On the 27th of October 1810, an edict was signed by the king, abolishing the exemption from taxes hitherto enjoyed by the nobility, and providing for a general survey and valuation of estates. Three days after, another edict was signed, which confiscated all ecclesiastical property for the good of the State, and appropriated it to the payment of the public debt. It may be observed, *en passant*, that the spirit of this edict does not seem to be preserved in the late *concordat* concluded with the Pope by the Prince himself in person, which provides for a large

landed endowment of several Catholic bishoprics. This fact alone would strongly intimate, what is clear enough from many others, that a different spirit is now at work from that of 1810 and 1812. A third edict was signed on the 2d of November of the same year, which abolished all monopolies and apprenticeships in trades, and gave to every citizen the liberty of exercising his industry in the way he may think proper. Thus, says a late German writer, had the Prussian cabinet, in six days, advanced as far in the career of political improvement as the national assembly of France had done in two years. It may be remarked, that the assembly was not at the time accused of inactivity. The rapidity of this march is, therefore, as Benzenberg justly observes, a strong proof how extensive had been the circulation of the ideas on which these measures are founded within the last thirty years, and how thoroughly they have penetrated into the whole frame of society. After six days of such momentous achievement, the Prince Chancellor reposed from his labours till the 14th of September 1811, when an edict was signed, still more remarkable, perhaps, than any of the preceding, which gives to the villains or serfs, upon their surrendering to the lords a third or a half of the land they hold at will, a fee simple in the rest. By this regulation an entire class of the community, which was till now wholly destitute of personal rights, is presented with the opportunity of ob-

taining not only relief from oppression and nominal freedom, but real independence in the possession of property. To close at once the account of what has actually been done for the political organization of Prussia, it may be added, that at a later period, to wit, in 1816, a new division of the kingdom was introduced, by which it is distributed into ten provinces, twenty-eight government circles, and three hundred and forty-five provincial circles; and that in 1817, the Council of State was established, consisting of the princes of the blood royal, the ministers, presidents of courts of justice, military governors of provinces, and such other persons as the king may name. Such are the improvements which have actually been effected. Before I proceed to consider what steps have been taken for a further prosecution of this system, it may not be uninteresting to cast a glance upon the practical operation of the edict of 1811, in favor of the peasants, as described by the intelligent German writer whom I just now quoted.

In the western or Rhenish provinces of Prussia, personal servitude and the feudal distribution of land had long before been abolished by the government of France; and it is only upon the middle and eastern provinces, to wit, Prussia proper, Silesia, Pomerania, and the mark of Brandenburg, that the new system has any operation. In all these countries the land was possessed in large estates by the nobility; and the peasantry had

neither property nor personal rights. They held at will such portions of land as the lord chose to assign them, upon which they built their habitations in the form of a little village, and which they cultivated for themselves; performing at the same time for their lords such agricultural and other labours as were imposed upon them. The lord administered justice and exercised most of the rights of sovereignty upon his estate; this system having grown up at a time when there was but little consistency in the superior territorial governments. In Pomerania, there were 763 of these estates, of which 136 were worth from 360 to 40,000 rix dollars, 74 from 40 to 30,000; 123 from 30 to 20,000; and 430 under twenty. Of the 455 square miles which the province contains these estates comprehend 260; of the rest 150 were occupied by the cities and royal domains; forty by royal and other public forests; and five only were left for the free farmers. Of the 260 square miles occupied by the noble proprietors, it was calculated that 156 were improved for the benefit of the lords, and 104 assigned to the peasantry. The peasantry then, by surrendering to the lords one-half or one-third of this latter portion, obtain a freehold estate in the remainder: so that, by the operation of this edict, the amount of land belonging to the independent farmers in Pomerania will be increased from five square miles to sixty or seventy. This augmentation will give the peasantry

all the room to extend their industry and population, which for the present they can desire or could employ. As their numbers and wealth increase, they will naturally overstep this limit, and will not only recover by purchase the land they surrendered, but will probably extend their acquisitions much farther. The land, as this writer justly observes, is most valuable to those who cultivate it themselves; and it is the natural result of a free circulation of property, that every article falls into the hands of those who can improve it best and make it most productive, because they can afford to pay more for it than any body else.

In the mark of Brandenburg, there were 1200 of these lordships, belonging to about 700 noble families; and to these and the royal domains together, were attached about 78,600 families of serfs. These, by the operation of the new system, may all be expected to become freeholders. There were also 44,000 other families on these estates, who had no connexion whatever with the land, but who may also be expected to acquire property now that the land has become an article of commerce. And on this supposition, the number of independent cultivators in Brandenburg, will increase in the course of ten or twenty years, from 3143 families, the number at which it stood before, to 125,000. Such are the calculations of this author in regard to the operation of the edict of Sept. 1811: They are given with a minuteness that supposes accuracy,

and apparently without enthusiasm. I have not had the opportunity, nor if I had, should I have thought it necessary for the present purpose, to investigate their correctness in detail. Supposing the facts to be more or less incorrectly stated, or the anticipated result to be more or less overcharged, it will still be sufficiently evident that the general operation of the new system is to convert the agricultural population of Prussia from wretched slaves into independent freeholders. Its general effect must, in consequence, be a great increase of industry, wealth, and population. Such a system does infinite honour to the statesman who planned and introduced it. He has been denounced for it, it seems, by the aristocracy, as a jacobin; but this is a reproach which every upright politician at the present day must expect to encounter in the same quarter. The friends of liberty and impartial posterity will respect him as the benefactor of his country. It is but justice to one who has actually done so much for liberal principles, to put a favourable construction upon such parts of his administration as wear a doubtful aspect; and it must be confessed, that his proceedings in regard to the establishment of a representative constitution, require to be so interpreted, in order to appear consistent in their spirit with the measures I have been describing.

The liberal spirit which generally prevailed in Prussia, in consequence of the circumstances which

have been mentioned, previously to the last campaigns, was greatly heightened and extended by the zeal with which every class of the nation then co-operated in the great work of independence. The Prussians appear to have made themselves more obnoxious to the French than any other portion of the allied forces, probably for the very reason that they were more enthusiastic in the cause, and consequently animated by a more intense hostility against the nation which had oppressed them. An impartial observer, instead of hating them for it, must view, on the contrary, with delight and sympathy, this noble developement of the most generous feelings in the best of causes. At the close of the war the government seems to have felt the propriety of rewarding these patriotic exertions by the establishment of a representative constitution: and never surely, had this magnificent boon been granted, would the loftiest deserts have been more fitly and fully recompensed. On the 22d of May 1815, an edict was published, commanding that a constitution should be drawn up, in which provision should be made for a representation of the people; and ordering that deputies from all the provinces should assemble on the first of September of the same year, to deliberate with commissioners named by the king, upon the formation of this important instrument. This is the celebrated promise, the breach of which has been the subject of so much commentary and reprehension. The

arrangement contemplated, as appears from its terms, the preparation of a constitution in the most liberal manner, to wit, as has since been done in Wurtemburg, in the form of a social contract, to be agreed upon by common consent, between the deputies of the government and those of the people. It may be mentioned, as a further proof of the homage then paid by the cabinet to public opinion, that the celebrated Goëthe, the literary idol of the Germans, now venerable for his great age as well as his illustrious name in poetry, was designated as the person who was to hold the pen upon this great national occasion. At the same moment when the edict was issued, the Prussian cabinet was urging at Vienna the adoption of representative constitutions in the German states; and from the combined effect of these various circumstances, there remained no doubt whatever in the public mind of the sincerity of their intentions, or of the immediate performance of the promise

But the summer passed away, and no commissioners were named by the king: the first of September arrived, and brought with it no deputation from the provinces. There arose, on the contrary, at Berlin, an unprofitable contest of parties and pamphlets. By dint of sophistry and passion, it was found possible to obscure the clearest truths and to corrupt the best feelings. The aristocracy urged the danger of popular excesses, if a liberal constitution should be adopted; and their sug-

gestions were backed by the influence of foreign powers, who were blowing cold upon representative government at Berlin, while they were blowing hot in favour of it at Vienna. And the influence of foreign powers means a very different thing among the contiguous continental states from its import with us, or even in England. Another party cherished the idea of a military monarchy, as the system under which Prussia had risen to its present greatness. They were apprehensive that by changing the constitution, they should destroy the instrument of all their past and possible future augmentation of power. A third party, consisting of the fanatical and exclusive partisans of every thing German, while they desired a new constitution, detested the modern political ideas, because they had been developed in France. They were continually dwelling upon the glories of the middle ages, when according to them the civilization of Europe had attained the point of perfection, from which it has been ever since upon the decline. "Which of us," says one of them, "would not wish to possess the simple energy, the piety, and the sincerity of the noble heroes and heroines of the *Nibelungen Lied?*" — "Who would not willingly return to those intellectual flower gardens, which supplied the garlands of roses that entwine the window casements of the Gothic cathedral at Cologne?" The most active supporters of these opinions had also

been among the most ardent and determined enemies of the French; and the system, notwithstanding its radical absurdity, was perhaps at the moment more popular in Germany than any other. The general result of this conflict of views and interests at Berlin, seems to have been a determination in the cabinet, that the constitution could not with safety be introduced immediately; and that it must be established upon the basis of the political institutions which had formerly existed in the several provinces under the name of *Estates*, but which had for some time fallen into disuse.

The expediency of connecting new political institutions as much as possible with those that already exist, is too obvious to escape the attention of any sound politician. But there seems to be a singular inconsistency in attempting to draw out, under this pretext, the mouldering relics of ancient usages from the graves where they have been deposited for centuries. This is merely a wanton augmentation of the essential difficulty attending all political reforms. In this particular case the restoration of the feudal institutions was not only inexpedient, but on other accounts impossible. In the Rhenish provinces the aristocratic families, which about the middle of the 17th century had arrogated to themselves the right of holding the assembly of estates, and voting the taxes, while they left to the commons the exclusive privi-

lege of paying them, had, in the course of time, and by the various revolutions which have lately occurred, lost their property and mostly become extinct. In some provinces, we are told, that the feudal assembly of estates, if restored, must have been held by a single person. In the eastern division of the monarchy, the aristocracy composed exclusively the ancient estates, as they held at that time all the property; but the basis of this system had been shaken, as I have shewn before, by the new system of legislation, and could not be revived at least without the abolition of the edict of Sept. 1811. The revival of the feudal states being then physically impossible, it would have been necessary, in order to *found the constitution upon an historical basis*—this was the favourite phrase—to go back to a period anterior to the comparatively recent one, at which these states assumed their last modification—a period in which the spirit, if not the form of the political usages, coincided much more nearly with the notions of the present day, than with those of the 15th and 16th centuries. It is important, says Madame de Staël with great justice, to remind those who are continually appealing to antiquity in support of the doctrine of despotism, that the ancient usage was liberty, and that privilege is the modern invention. In fact, it was a universal right of all freemen, through the several branches of the great German race in ancient times, to assemble in the

fields of March and of May *, to deliberate upon public affairs. At the present day such assemblies would be too large for despatch of business, and it would be necessary to substitute the principle of deputation for that of personal appearance; and this is precisely the modern system of representative government.

The impossibility of founding a new government upon the basis of the feudal institutions must have been perceived by the commissioners, who had been sent out by the Prussian cabinet to examine upon the spot the usages of the several provinces; and the idea has probably been abandoned. Meanwhile the delay occasioned by these researches created of itself an additional obstacle as it contributed probably more than any other cause to excite the sort of popular fermentation that arose in Germany at the close of the year 1817, and at which the governments either were or affected to be very greatly alarmed. This fermentation, no doubt, wore a more serious aspect than it would otherwise have done, from the simultaneous exhibition of uneasiness in England, France, and Spain. If the transactions in Germany are considered

* *Marz lager* and *Mai lager*. In the French language, the word *champ* has taken the place of *camp* in the translation of these terms, apparently by an accidental equivoque; and the great assemblies, at the commencement of the Revolution and during the hundred days, intended as a revival or rather as a dramatic representation of the ancient usages of the Franks, were called *Fields of March and May*, instead of *Camps*.

separately, it is difficult to imagine any thing in the shape of popular discontent more perfectly innocent.

The scene of these pretended rebellious proceedings was laid, from first to last, among the students at the universities and their instructors; nor has it been proved, or even, that I am aware of, pretended, that any other class of persons took any part in them whatever. An active interference by students in the administration of the government is sufficiently improper; but it is equally clear, that it could never be productive of danger to the public tranquillity: and in this case, as it was the result of a previous state of things, which had been brought about by the act of the government, the parties concerned were entitled to every indulgence, and the most favourable construction of their motives. In fact, the students at the universities had been invited by their instructors, and by the public authorities, to enter the army as volunteers during the late struggles. They had yielded to the call with all the ardor that belongs to their period of life; had shared without shrinking in the dangers and fatigues of the war; and had given in general the highest satisfaction by their good conduct, and strict observance of discipline, as well as by their courage. At the close of the war, they returned again to the shades of the academy; but at a time of life, when men act under the influence of habit and feeling rather than

reason, it was not to be expected that they should lose at once all their interest in public affairs, or should refrain entirely from displaying it. On the contrary it was far from being unnatural that they should rather push it to a fanatical extent; and as they had been called upon to risk their lives for the public, should consider that their advice and opinions might also be worth attention. Such in fact was the effect produced. The students of the universities embraced with ardor the pure Teutonic party, to which I have alluded, and which was supported with eloquence and zeal in various publications by many of the professors. In their detestation of every thing foreign, they even condemned the European dress, as an innovation upon the ancient customs of Germany; and assumed, almost universally, a sort of uniform supposed to resemble more nearly the dress which was worn by their forefathers some centuries ago. In all this there was a great deal of exaggeration; but their leading political tenet was sound and excellent. The *union of Germany* was proclaimed as the object of their exertions; and in this particular the Nestors at the Congress might with great profit have taken counsel from these beardless politicians. In order to contribute within the sphere of their own activity to the accomplishment of this end, they entered into a general league called the *Teutonic association*, which comprehended the great majority of the students at all the universi-

ties. The first public intimation given of the existence of this institution seems to have been the meeting of deputies from all the branches at the castle of Wartburg in Saxony, on the 18th of October 1817, to celebrate the anniversary of the battle of Leipsic. The discourses and proceedings at this assembly are said to have been in some degree disorderly; but the choice of the day upon which it was held, sufficiently explained the spirit which was operating, and proved it to be the result of the excitement produced among the students by their participation in the late campaigns. This circumstance alone might have prevented any uneasiness upon the subject in the minds of the sovereigns.

It appears, however, on the contrary, that these proceedings attracted very strongly the attention of the governments, and were looked upon as highly important and alarming. At the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was holden the following September, they were taken into consideration; and a memoir was written upon the subject by M. de Stourdza, a counsellor of state in the Russian service, of Greek extraction. It seems that this pamphlet was not intended for general circulation, and great precautions were taken to prevent it from being made public. Fifty copies only were printed for the use of the Congress; and while the work was going through the press, a picket of soldiers was stationed in the printing office, under

the direction of a Russian counsellor of state, to see that no more were struck off. Notwithstanding these precautions, the work appeared at Paris a few weeks after in two or three languages; and more perhaps from the mystery that enveloped its production, than for any thing very remarkable in its contents, it excited a high degree of attention in Germany, although it does not seem to have been much heard of elsewhere. It was a short essay, in about thirty pages octavo, upon the state of the universities, and was in no way remarkable either in point of thought or style. The students and professors, however, felt themselves highly piqued at this interference of a foreigner in their affairs. Innumerable replies were published, in the shape of reviews, pamphlets, and newspaper articles; and to make the refutation more complete, the author was invited by one of the students to decide the merits of the quarrel in the old Teutonic way, by duel. The counsellor declined this polite request, on the ground that he had drawn up the pamphlet at the instance of his imperial master, and was not personally responsible for its contents. This explanation, which was not wholly free from indiscretion, gave still more importance and interest to the pamphlet, as it established the fact, which was only suspected before, that the Emperor Alexander was the real author. The war of words was renewed with additional fury. The universities were naturally amply furnished with literary champions;

and it may well be supposed that a work written under the dictation of an emperor, would also find apologists, whatever might be its merits. One of the principal of these was Kotzebue, who then published a literary journal, and was known to be a political agent of Russia. It was the part he took in this quarrel which turned upon him a large share of the exasperation created by this attack upon the universities, and which consequently led to his assassination. This lamentable catastrophe, resulting from political fanaticism exalted to insanity in the mind of a young and melancholy enthusiast, rather tended to establish the purity and correctness of the principles of its author than their falsehood; for no sentiments but those of a generous and elevated kind ever have led or ever can lead to excesses of this description. The first effect of the dominion of selfish and vicious motives in the mind, is to subdue the glow of sentiment, to substitute calculation for illusion, and method for madness. Enthusiasm supposes of necessity sincere and virtuous intentions, although it is compatible, as every day's experience too plainly shews, with the most atrocious actions. The act however was well fitted to raise still higher the alarm of the governments, as it actually did. The conferences at Carlsbad were held soon after, and the public were informed that a vast and dangerous conspiracy had been discovered against all the German sovereigns. Persons were arrested, and papers

were seized; but although two years have now passed since these events, none of the supposed offenders have yet been proved to be guilty, nor has any satisfactory evidence been given to the public of the reality of the pretended plot. Some selections were officially published by the Prussian government, from the papers which had been seized, consisting of the correspondence of students at the academies and colleges. There were passages sufficiently objectionable; but nothing that either looked like conspiracy, or, considering the quarter from which the whole proceeded, was worth a moment's attention; and as the object of the government was to justify the violence of their proceedings, they probably published the worst they found. There is every reason to suppose, that the pretended conspiracy was nothing more than the general association I have mentioned among the students of the several universities.

The alarm created by these popular discontents was supposed, however, to have had great influence in delaying the introduction of representative government in Prussia, and was certainly employed as a pretext to justify the delay. But while these proceedings were in progress, the cabinet had still given some indication of a disposition to persevere in the business. On the 31st of March 1817, the Council of State was organised, and at the same time a commission was actually named to prepare a constitution; but no steps were taken for carry-

ing the plan into immediate effect, so that it is uncertain whether the chancellor had any other design in appointing the commissioners than merely to satisfy the public that he was still intent upon this object. If this was his view, it may well be doubted how far the measure was politic. If circumstances rendered it inexpedient to fulfil, at present, the engagement that had been made, the better way would have been to permit the expectations of the people to die away entirely, until the period when it was found convenient to gratify them. The chancellor seems, on the contrary, through the whole of these proceedings to have studiously kept alive the public anxiety, by continual intimations that the affair was in progress, and that the government was sincere, while at the same time the pretexts used to justify the delay were, as has been seen, of a frivolous and insufficient character. Besides the encouragement given by the appointment of the commissioners, the language held by this minister in his conversation with the deputies from the Rhenish provinces, who were sent to compliment him upon a visit, which he made to that country at the beginning of the year 1818, was highly constitutional. A printed report of this conversation was published by professor Goerres, who was at the head of the deputation, and has since acquired notoriety by the persecutions he has suffered from the Prussian government; and it seems from this report that the principles advanced by

the chancellor were even much more truly liberal than those of the deputation; the latter being infected with the false and fanatical enthusiasm for the institutions of the middle ages to which I have already adverted, while the former maintained in their purity the liberal political notions of the present day. About the same time, viz. on the 5th of February 1818, a note was presented to the Diet by the Prussian minister, stating the circumstances which had hitherto prevented the introduction of the proposed constitution in Prussia, and intimating strongly that it would certainly be done within a year. This succession of contradictory measures, this promising without performance, and delaying without denial, this giving with one hand and taking back with the other, seems to argue, what was probably the fact, and has indeed been established very fully by subsequent events, that there had been through the whole of this period a struggle of parties in the cabinet; that the anti-constitutional interest was strong enough to defeat the immediate accomplishment of the object; that the chancellor himself was really determined upon the measure, and thought it expedient on this account to keep up the expectations of the people, while at the same time he could not venture to risk his influence in the cabinet by pressing it too much against a powerful opposition.

The general result of all that had been said and done, relating to the subject, was a prevalent

opinion, about the middle of the year 1820, that the constitution was nearly, or quite ready, for the royal signature, and that it would be published on the king's birth-day, which was the 3d of August. Instead of this, it was precisely at this period that the meeting of ministers was held at Carlsbad, and the pretended conspiracy announced at Berlin. At the close of the same year a change took place in the Prussian cabinet, by the removal of the three ministers who had been generally supposed to be the most earnest in favour of the constitution. One of these was the distinguished statesman and scholar Baron William Humboldt, the brother of the celebrated traveller. This ministerial revolution at once confirmed the opinion that had been entertained of an existing struggle in the cabinet, and crushed for the time the hopes of the constitutional party. But the chancellor had hardly taken this apparently decisive step, when, faithful to the system of double-dealing which has constantly been pursued in regard to this subject, he began to hold out fresh encouragement. In the edict for the regulation of the finances, signed on the 17th of January 1821, almost immediately after the removal of the three liberal ministers, the *estates of the kingdom* are mentioned as an existing institution, and certain functions are assigned to them in the superintendance of the finances; and two months later a letter, written by the chancellor to a private correspondent, was published in the

newspapers, in which he remarks, "that the public ought to put a better construction upon the deliberate course which the government had pursued; and that the constitution would be established agreeably to the promise which had been given, and especially to the original edict of the 22d of May 1815." This is the last occurrence of a public nature in relation to this affair. Since the time when it took place, the Prussian government has been wholly employed, in concert with other powers, in abolishing the liberal institutions at Naples — no very favourable omen of their immediate introduction at home. The final consequence of all these contradictory proceedings will depend perhaps upon chance, and the turn that may be taken by the general politics of Europe.

Such are the principal facts that serve to illustrate the present state and immediate future prospects of Germany, in regard to the introduction of representative government. From the remarks which have been made upon this subject, and upon the present form of the confederacy, it will be perceived that even the complete and general establishment of this system, will supply a very inadequate remedy to the defects of the existing institutions, without a more intimate union and consolidation of the several states. Independently of the burden laid upon the country for the support of a multitude of separate governments, all in a monarchical and of course an expensive form,

the mode in which these taxes are levied imposes a most vexatious and ruinous restraint upon industry and commerce. In the most populous part of Germany, the merchant is met at every few leagues with a fresh line of custom houses. Let him travel by land or water, every second or third day brings him into a new sovereignty, which must be acknowledged by the payment of new tolls and duties. No lawful and honest trade can flourish under such oppression; and the necessary consequence of it is an extensive contraband traffic, the decline of industry at home, and the general impoverishment of the country. The minor states are now deliberating together by deputation upon this subject, and are endeavouring to digest a plan for the abolition of all duties upon internal commerce. The liberal governments in the south of Germany are understood to be at the head of the attempt; and their object is, if possible, to clear the way of these pernicious barriers by land and water, from Switzerland to the ocean. The vast benefit that would result from this to every individual, and every nation affected by it, is obvious at a glance. But the ignorance and jealousy of some of the cabinets will, in all probability, prevent the accomplishment of the design. As the merchants descend the Rhine, their way is barred by Prussia, a state sufficiently important to imagine that she has an interest in oppressing her inferiors; and as they approach the sea, they meet with Great Britain,

by two or three different names, waging, under all, a war of extermination with the industry of every country but her own, under the mistaken notion that an idle and wretched community is a better customer than an industrious and wealthy one. It can hardly be hoped that this truly liberal and patriotic effort will succeed to any considerable extent. The only mode of effecting the object is by a closer political consolidation of the several governments. But the reasons of state that oppose this measure, are too powerful to be overcome by the spontaneous action of any internal force. The convulsions of the last thirty years have done much in this respect for Germany, having reduced the number of independent sovereignties from three or four hundred to between thirty and forty. The jealousies existing among these remaining powers, and the baneful intermeddling of foreigners, will prevent the reform from going any further at present, and the country must wait for its deliverance till the arrival of another general concussion in the political fabric of Europe.

The institutions which determine the situation of private property and personal rights, and which form the most interesting and important feature in the constitutions of all countries, are extremely various in different parts of Germany, especially if we include under this general head all the dominions of the house of Austria. In the eastern part of this vast region, in Hungary and Bohemia, and

most of the Austrian possessions, personal servitude still exists. The territory of Hungary, with a population of 8,000,000, is owned almost exclusively by about 60,000 noble families, and inhabited principally by boors attached to the soil. These, however, with the few free citizens who are not noble, pay the taxes, the lords being exempt from this obligation. In Bohemia this state of things exists in substance; but industry has made greater progress, and the class of free citizens is more numerous. In Silesia personal servitude was abolished in 1807. It was supposed that the French would take this step, and the Prussian cabinet made haste to anticipate them, in order to obtain the credit of it; which, considering the motives of both parties, could not be very great for either. The general state of property in the several provinces of Prussia has been mentioned before. In the kingdom of Wurtemberg, personal servitude is expressly abolished by an article of the new constitution: and in most of the southern and western parts of Germany, it has in a great measure disappeared. In the Rhenish provinces of Prussia, and the other countries where the French code was introduced, the equal distribution of estates among all the children was introduced with it. In the other parts of Germany, the land generally descends to the eldest son, on feudal principles: other property follows the rule of the Roman law, and is divided.

Every where in this country there is a great and pernicious inequality of personal rights, even where the servitude of the peasant, the most revolting feature in the system, has been abolished. The German aristocracy is not, like that of France and England, an institution almost wholly nominal. Its members monopolize, on the contrary, most of the property, and all the political employments and social consideration. The contrary plan of general freedom, equality of legal rights, and the admissibility of citizens of all classes to all employments, is gradually gaining favor, and in some of the states, is now established by law; but even in these, the spirit of it does not yet seem to predominate. The monopoly of social distinctions, prescriptively possessed in Germany by the titled classes, has given them an insufferable arrogance, which does not belong to the nobles in some other parts of Europe, at least in nearly the same degree. A German Baron, in the pride of his two and thirty quarters, considers the most virtuous and enlightened man in Europe, as a being of an inferior species. In England and France, on the contrary, the hereditary nobles have learnt by experience the superiority of elevated personal qualities over the accidents of social position; and have been compelled in self-defence to act upon the conviction, and to court the power which would otherwise crush them. Even the French emigrants, in principle perhaps the most bigotted

portion of the European aristocracy, are obliged to place in their front ranks such superior minds as they can seduce from the party of the people. This will also be the case in Germany, if the representative system obtains the ascendancy. Wherever it prevails, the first political distinctions, and the consideration they confer, must belong to talent and character; for no other power can wield this mighty machine to the profit of any party. It is one of the advantages of this sort of government, that although it may not be always administered with justice, it must be, in general, with ability.

The necessary consequence of the discordance between the existing institutions and the state of society in all the civilised parts of Germany, has been a strong expression of public opinion in favor of reform; not proceeding, as in England, from the lowest class of the people, headed by factious demagogues; but from the enlightened, wealthy, and respectable portion of the population. This opinion finds an active and zealous representative in the literary profession, which is more numerous and industrious here than any where else, and which is almost wholly in the liberal interest. The universities, as I have had occasion to observe before, are all so many central points of popular principles and feelings. The governments seem to have had the simplicity to suppose, that they could keep down the expression of this spirit,

by appointing a sort of diplomatic agent, or official inspector, to reside at each university. A better way would have been to take the universities into their own hands, and to endow the professorships with large revenues, independent of the merit or exertions of the incumbent. In this way the seditious zeal of these establishments would soon have been allayed; although it must also be admitted, that their literary pre-eminence would have probably disappeared with it. As loyalty came in at one door, activity, and with it philosophy and literature, would have gone out at the other; and the professors would have soon become, like those of Oxford and Cambridge, excellent subjects, but very lazy and indifferent thinkers and writers. As the demand for claret and madeira increased at the universities, the supply from that quarter of deep thoughts and fine imaginations, would have proportionally fallen off; and this is precisely what the sovereigns want, if we may be allowed to judge from the Emperor of Austria's address to the professors at Laybach. To tempt by making rich, not making poor, would have therefore been the course pursued by these potentates, had they possessed the acuteness of a certain distinguished politician; and until they conclude to adopt it, it is hardly probable that they will succeed in their object. Can it be necessary to repeat at the present day, that persecution gives importance and publicity to opinions, right or wrong, whether

political or religious, instead of suppressing them? Necessary it is, for there is not a government in Europe which does not act habitually, as if the reverse were true; and yet, as a general rule, the principle is so universally admitted, that it has become trivial. The doctors are all of one mind, and the disciples are all of another: as Gamaliel of old was teaching toleration in the Sanhedrim, while Saul, who was brought up at his feet, was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the Christians in the city. The excess to which this system of persecution has been carried, in some instances, is truly revolting. Thus, Dewette, a most learned and liberal theological professor at Berlin, has been deprived of his place, that is, of his means of subsistence, at an advanced age, for writing a letter to a private correspondent, which was never published till it was printed by the government to justify the proceeding. This was a letter of consolation to the mother of the unhappy Sand: it was unobjectionable in its tenor, and in reality had nothing whatever to do with politics. It was intended to relieve the agony of her distress, by assuring her that the motives of her son were pure, and that the morality of the act he had done must be judged of upon this ground only. The principle of morals here supposed is so far from being doubtful, that it is quite common place; and if the public application of it to this act were inexpedient, Dewette was not the less innocent,

for his letter was wholly private: the contents of it were discovered by the iniquitous measure of opening it in the post-office, and it was with great difficulty that a copy of it could be obtained to be used against him. The forms of the Spanish inquisition may have been more brutal; but there was nothing in the spirit of it more outrageous than this. This is the system which brought Algernon Sydney to the scaffold, and James II. to exile and beggary; and if it does not reduce those who now act upon it to the same condition, they will have to thank their foreign allies for their safety.

Conscious that their institutions are incapable of resisting the force of public opinion, fully and freely expressed, the great German powers have established throughout their dominions the most rigid restrictions upon the liberty of the press; and by an arbitrary stretch of influence, have compelled the small states to adopt the same system. Throughout these vast regions, where the human intellect is more active and prolific than in any other part of the world, not a sound can be lisped in opposition to existing establishments, however vicious and unnatural; not a syllable can pass through the press without the inspection of censors, and the approbation of princes. When we reflect upon this, and when we consider, in addition, the perfection to which the system of passports has been carried, and that through the whole continent of

Europe no individual can move a step from his domicile, even to the next village, without obtaining the formal permission of the public authorities, and giving a fresh account of himself at every stage of his journey; when we think of the arbitrary restrictions under which the mass of the people are compelled every where to exercise their lawful callings; of the exorbitant exactions that are wrung from them under pretence of paying the necessary expences of government; of the continual wars in which their blood is poured out like water, to afford their rulers the occupation and excitement of superintending these magnificent and sanguinary gladiatorial games; when we think of the infernal art with which the yoke is fastened upon the very minds of the whole population, so that the fine and etherial movement of thought is as much tied up and shackled by degrading superstitions, as the action of the body is fettered by the system of passports and bayonets; when we think of this state of things, it is almost impossible not to doubt for a moment the reality of the supposed advantages belonging to the the Europeans over the other branches of the human family. The subjects of the milder and more civilized empires of the East, such as China, Japan, and the neighbouring states, certainly possess much more real personal liberty than is now enjoyed on the continent of Europe; and the advantages resulting from the superiority to which

the arts and sciences have been here pushed, are not much felt by the mass of the people, while in the hands of their oppressors, this very superiority is used as a most effective instrument against them. Even in the Mahometan countries, however rude and brutal may be their outward forms, the essential state of things does not seem to be materially worse. There, as here, an individual whose existence is wholly independent of political affairs, may probably vegetate at ease, except at the occurrence of some disastrous crisis, which may happen alike in Europe as in Asia; and if he has less security for his property, he also pays an infinitely smaller price for it. In both, if he attempts to step out of this circle, and interfere in the slightest degree by deed or word with the action of government, his property, liberty and life, are instantly forfeit; and the only difference seems to be whether the sentence is executed by Janissaries or *gens d'armes*, the bowstring or the bayonet.

But the difference in favour of Europe, and the consolation of the friends of liberty and humanity lie in this — that the oppression under which most of the Christian countries are now labouring is an accidental and transitory state of things, the agonising effort of despotism to retain its hold upon the power that is slipping through its grasp by the action of the great forces of nature, and which it is about as easy to control in this way as it would be to throw a halter over the tempest.

This state of things is produced by a reaction of artificial powers, against the overwhelming torrent of civilization; and like all unnatural and convulsive efforts; it demonstrates weakness, and not strength, in the quarter where it appears. We find in the history of Europe but few traces of this system previously to the reign of Bonaparte. It was he who first invented and put in practice this vast machinery, which envelopes, like an invisible net, every individual in Europe; and it is from him that the present most Christian sovereigns have received the discovery as a legacy. *It is wonderful* that this consideration does not strike them with more force — wonderful that they should employ without hesitation or scruple this mode of government, when they know that the anguish and despair produced by the operation of it in the hands of its author, was the only effective engine of resistance they were ever able to employ against him. *How can they avoid perceiving,* that the same opinions and feelings which were arrayed against Bonaparte, are now opposed to them; that the very individuals who were most active in stimulating the people to resist him, are now languishing in prison or in exile by their order, for professing the same doctrines they held before? In Germany, as in Spain, the patriots who in the worst of times had rendered the most important services to the royal families, are many of them withering in banishment, or dying in dungeons, because they

had the courage to shew, by their conduct, that they were inspired by a wish to serve their country, and not by blind devotion to the person of a despot. And the same result that happened in Spain must occur sooner or later in Germany. No power of congresses or *gens d'armes* can ultimately succeed in nailing this iron mask upon the fair face of civilized Europe as a permanent system. The political scene is constantly shifting—its actors are constantly changing their relations to each other —and if, as there is reason to fear, the cause of liberal principles in Germany has not sufficient internal force to make head against the overwhelming mass of foreign influence which now crushes it to the earth, it will infallibly derive relief and assistance from the effect of new political combinations that must happen in the course of events. If one accident does not produce them, another will. The affair of Naples threatened dissolution to the holy alliance; and had the cause of liberty been well supported in Italy, would have completed it. The struggle in the Turkish empire now holds out a new prospect of the same desirable occurrence. Should this also fail, something else will finally succeed; as the suppression of eleven insurrections in the Spanish peninsula only made the triumph of the twelfth more perfect and brilliant.

Of the different European governments, Germany, the only powerful nation which is organized

in the form of a confederacy, most naturally offers itself as an object of comparison with the United States; and the contrast between the situation of the two countries illustrates very strongly the excellence of our institutions, and the advantages of our position. The blessings we enjoy, and which we never prize sufficiently, till we have had the opportunity of ascertaining their value by contrast, are secured to us by two principal causes, one geographical, and the other political. The first is our distance from other nations of superior power, and the second, our internal union. Of these propitious circumstances, which may well be regarded as the peculiar favours of Providence bestowed upon our country, the one gives us complete security from foreign violence without the ruinous resource of standing armies, hardly less dangerous, when necessary, than the evil they are intended to remedy; and the other establishes our domestic politics upon the basis of perpetual peace. We may see in Germany, as in a mirror, what would have been our situation if we had not possessed the first of these securities, and what it would be, if we should ever deprive ourselves of the other. Of the bounty of nature, thank God, no human efforts can bereave us; and we may hope that the sacred tie of our union will hold us together as long as the vast Atlantic shall sever us from Europe. If, in an hour of madness, we should ever dissolve it, we should then see, as in Germany, our states ar-

rayed against each other in a perpetual succession of internal wars, our militia converted into standing armies, our presidents and governors into hereditary despots, our learned and upright magistrates into an insulting and oppressive aristocracy, and our free and happy population into wretched peasants and personal slaves. We should even lose the security we now derive from our remote position in regard to Europe. Foreign powers would obtain a footing among us, by flattering our sectional passions and interests; and would play us off against each other. Our welfare, like that of Germany, would be sacrificed to their cupidity and ambition; and we should find ourselves enveloped in a web of various oppression, which it would be at once impossible to shake off, and torment and death to wear.

CHAP. VI.

RUSSIA; SWEDEN AND DENMARK, THE NETHERLANDS.

In purely despotic or *autocratic* governments, the body politic is the sovereign. *L'état c'est moi*; "I am the State;" was an observation of Louis XIV.; and, *de facto*, the remark was just. In such countries, the only political changes are those which occur in the person of the ruler, either by the succession of a new incumbent to the throne, or by an alteration in the character and habits of the existing one. For a length of time to come, no other changes can occur in Russia, where the mass of the nation is in too uncivilized a state to aspire after better institutions, or to admit their introduction by rulers who know their value. Violent alterations in the line of succession have been frequent; and within a few years there has been a considerable apparent change in the policy and dispositions of the reigning emperor, which has had, and will continue to have, a very important influence in the general politics of Europe.

The emperor Alexander has been pronounced till lately, by general acknowledgment, a sincere friend of liberal political principles. They were transmitted to him, by hereditary descent, from his illustrious grandmother, the great Catherine; and by her direction, he was placed, in his youth, under the care of a tutor who was likely to strengthen these impressions; and a review of the emperor's administration, and of his personal language and conduct, will, perhaps, lead to the conclusion, that he really entertains, in theory, a partiality for liberal ideas; and that this partiality is sufficiently strong to induce him to put them in practice, when it is not overpowered by other motives of superior weight. The misfortune is, that where the adoption of public measures depends wholly upon the decision of a single person, there is no security that a correct judgment will be formed of existing circumstances. No honest man would be hardy enough to trust himself with determining a private affair, in which his own interest was concerned; and the case of a despotic sovereign is infinitely more difficult, as he has not the opportunity of enlightening his mind, by attending to the conflict of opinion which is going on abroad, but of which only a suppressed and modified echo arrives at his ears. His political or personal interest warps his reason; and with honest intentions, and liberal ideas, he rushes headlong into measures of the grossest and most violent oppression; and the piti-

ful sophistry, which he employs in defending them before the public, proves, that if it is sometimes not difficult for a man to impose upon other people, it is, beyond comparison, an easier task to impose upon himself.

The late change in the policy of the emperor Alexander in favor of illiberal notions of government, is, perhaps, only apparent; and there are strong indications in every part of his reign, that his liberality and magnanimity, however real, were never deeply seated enough to resist the force of immediate personal or political interest, acting in an opposite direction. If, as is generally supposed, he was privy to the act which preceded his accession to the throne, his liberal and magnanimous feelings did not prevent him from taking part in the most atrocious crime that a mortal can commit — pardonable, perhaps, if it were possible to pardon such an act, from considerations of political necessity; but wholly and essentially inconsistent with a thoroughly upright character. Without dwelling upon this event, in which his participation will always remain uncertain, the conquest of Finland was, under all the circumstances, a measure of precisely the same character with the partition of Poland. The sort of enthusiasm with which he attached himself, for a time, to the person and politics of Bonaparte, even to the extent of approving and co-operating in the attack on Spain, surpassed the measure of excusable compliance with existing cir-

cumstances. This feeling indeed, continued, to all appearance, in full force, till Napoleon took pains to remove it by his own folly. Such an *engouement* for the person of a tyrant was quite inconsistent with a thorough and deep felt liberality. During the struggle with France, the state of Europe favored and required the fullest developement of liberal principles; and the emperor professed, and probably felt them in all their purity. But they did not prevent him at the peace from sanctioning the outrage of the partition in Poland, and disturbing the balance of power in Europe, by annexing that country to his dominions; granting it, indeed, at the same time a constitution, nominally liberal, but which, from the social condition of Poland, is, and can be, nothing but a name. And we now see, that all his liberality and magnanimity have not prevented him from supporting the most wanton and violent aggression on the liberties of Italy; and from frowning severely and portentously on that of Spain, Germany, and probably France; indeed, by his public documents and official declarations, from disowning and blaspheming all intelligible and honest notions of freedom in general.

All these circumstances argue either great insincerity, (a supposition which the known personal character of the man renders improbable,) or a weak and wavering mind, incapable of reasoning and acting with consistency, or of resisting, in practice, the seduction of immediate interest.

They argue a wonderful aptitude for self-deception; and, in the private life of this monarch, we see a combination of exalted sentiments and dissolute morals, which results from the same general cause. It is usual to allow to sovereigns an exemption from certain restraints, which public opinion imposes upon the rest of mankind; and I have no disposition to be more rigorous than others in this respect; but I may be allowed to observe, that the union of voluptuousness with mystical devotion proves a weak head as well as a warm heart; and these appear to be the two prominent points in the emperor's character, public and private. When, therefore, Madame de Stael told him, that his character was a constitution to his empire, and his conscience a sufficient guarantee of it, she was acting, perhaps unconsciously, the part of an elegant flatterer. "Prudence," says Rousseau, with singular acuteness and precision, "consists in avoiding the occurrence of difficult cases; and virtue, in doing your duty when they happen." Without exacting of the emperor the more than human prudence that would have been required to keep clear of difficulty in the times in which we live, it is evident enough, that he has but small claim to the praise of virtue, when thus understood. A few grains of common honesty, and common sense, would have taught him, that a son was not at liberty, in any circumstances, to dethrone and assassinate his father; that it was neither just nor ge-

nerous, to ravish from a brother-in-law in distress a third of his dominions; that an emperor of Russia had employment enough at home, without undertaking to govern Poland, and control the politics of all the independent nations in Europe; and finally, that a friend of liberal principles was very inconsistently employed in attempting to put these principles down, by force of arms, wherever they made their appearance.

I reserve for a separate chapter on the balance of power, the consideration of the influence of Russia in the general politics of Europe.

Of Sweden and Denmark, it is unnecessary to speak in much detail in so general a sketch as this. Denmark has long been wholly passive in its politics, both foreign and domestic; although it has possessed in the family of Bernstorff, a succession of the ablest and most enlightened ministers that have ever presided over the destinies of any European kingdom. Its fortunes during the late war were similar in this to those of the United States, that it was at times the object of the unjust attacks of both the great belligerent parties: but Denmark was not, as we were, in a situation to oppose a manly and effective resistance to their insolent pretensions. Her capital was bombarded, as ours was burned, in defiance of the civilized modes of warfare, and common humanity *: but

* The author of a work lately published in England, entitled "An Account of the Campaigns at Washington and New Orleans,

with us this outrage only roused the indignation of the people, and led to a more vigorous and successful conduct of the war; while Denmark was compelled to sign an ignominious peace by the light of her burning palaces, and upon the ruins of her shattered monuments of art. At a later period, she lent her flag to France, as an instrument of aggression upon neutral commerce, and in particular upon that of the United States. As a punishment for having been, during the preceding struggles, the weakest and most unfortunate of the European powers, she was despoiled of half her territory by the congress of Vienna, in order that Sweden might obtain an indemnity for the loss of

by a British Officer," has undertaken to represent this outrage as a just retaliation upon the Americans for the murder of General Ross's horse, shot, as he says, from a window in the city of Washington, observing at the same time, that all the persons found in the house were previously put to the sword, to satisfy the *manes* of this implacable animal. A British officer has other things to study beside the law of nature and nations, and may not be aware that had General Ross himself been shot from a window, instead of his horse, those proceedings would not have been a whit more justifiable either in right or usage. But any man of common humanity, however ignorant of law, would have revolted at the idea of sacrificing a house full of innocent people, and burning down several magnificent public buildings, to expiate the death of a quadruped. This would have been something worse than the madness of the Roman emperor, who appointed his horse consul. There is reason to hope, and even to believe, that the motive assigned by the British officer was not the real one; but as he has undertaken to justify the measure on this ground, he is entitled to an equal degree of credit for good sense and good feelings, whether his account is correct or not.

Finland. It would seem that Russia could better have afforded to restore Finland, than Denmark to surrender Norway; and it is worth remark, that Russia, in order to add to her immeasureable territory this little corner, was thus guilty of a double robbery; first, by plundering Sweden of this province without the slightest pretence of a claim, and secondly, by plundering Denmark of Norway, in an equally unjustifiable way, to indemnify Sweden; for although the honourable task of starving the Norwegians into consent devolved upon the British fleet, the obstinacy of Russia in retaining Finland, without regard to the great services and just pretensions of the king of Sweden, was the real cause of the dismemberment of Denmark.

This act of injustice has somewhat embarrassed the internal politics of Sweden since the peace, notwithstanding the great talent and truly generous spirit of the present administration. The reluctance of the Norwegians to perform the part which devolved upon them in satisfying the pretensions of Denmark, under the treaty of cession, made it extremely difficult for Sweden to execute this treaty, and seemed at one moment to threaten a rupture with Denmark. The emperor Alexander, who had some right to be regarded as impartial, having plundered both kingdoms in succession, exhibited a disposition to favour the claim of Denmark; and treated the king of Sweden with marked incivility, returning even, without opening

it, a letter written to him by the king with his own hand. About the same time Prince Gustavus, the son of the dethroned monarch, was sent for to Petersburgh, and thence despatched to England for his education, under the protection of his imperial uncle: and in another quarter, a marriage was contracted between the heirs of the crown of Baden, relations of the emperor, and the sisters of young Gustavus. All this wore rather an ominous aspect, and taken in connection with the prevailing fanaticism in favour of legitimacy, gave room for apprehension respecting the stability of the dynasty of Bernadotte. By the intervention of England, the affair was amicably adjusted; but the internal feuds between Sweden and Norway still continue upon this and other subjects.

It has been the fortune of Sweden, one of the least considerable states in Europe, to take a leading part in the adjustment of the balance of power, at the two most critical and important epochs in modern history. At the period of the thirty years' war, the interference of the Swedish arms, under the direction of the great Gustavus Adolphus, and the school of illustrious military chiefs which he had formed, decided the politics of Europe; and Sweden was in a manner the dominant power at the conclusion of the peace of Westphalia. At the late crisis her influence was far from being equally conspicuous; but if any one

separate event more than another gave the turn to this momentous struggle while its issue was yet doubtful, it was perhaps the diversion made in the rear of the French armies, in the year 1813, by the entry of Bernadotte into Prussia, and his victory over Marshal Ney at Dennewitz. The Swedes, though forming politically a secondary state, are individually one of the noblest branches of the great German race which peopled the whole north of Europe, and is now spreading itself over the whole of North America. They possess in an eminent degree the qualities which peculiarly belong to this race, such as temperance, industry, hardihood, courage, kindness, and a strong sentiment of moral obligation. They are excellent soldiers; and, however small their resources, experience has uniformly shewn that their alliance is useful and their enmity dangerous. Their institutions are sufficiently liberal, and the population in general has a fuller enjoyment of property and personal rights than perhaps any other in Europe; far more certainly than that of England, with all her wealth and power, and notwithstanding the boast of the present lord chancellor, that the meanest subject in Great Britain, is better than the first in any other country.* Their *savans* have

* "He felt, from the bottom of his heart, that the meanest subject of this country was better than the highest of any other country under heaven." Extract from a speech by the Lord Chancellor, reported in the London Times of Nov. 24, 1819.

placed the seat of the garden of Eden at the foot of the Norwegian mountains, as those of Belgium have discovered it in the swamps of the island of Walcheren. But if these are only innocent delusions, the country has advantages of much more importance. It is impossible for a traveller to pass through it without feeling respect and attachment for this excellent people. I have had the pleasure of visiting them myself, and I must say of their peasantry as the governor in Paul and Virginia does of the cottage at the isle of France, that, I found their dwellings furnished with plain wood; but filled with cheerful faces and golden hearts. The Norwegians are an equally respectable and generous nation; and it is much to be regretted, that so strong an enmity should exist between two branches of the same stock so nearly allied in character, habits and language, and whose political union, however unjust the act which brought it about, is a great and equal advantage to both.

An enmity, not less strong and unfortunate, exists between two other families of the same general race, which were also united by the Congress of Vienna into one body politic, and now form the kingdom of the Netherlands. It would perhaps be as difficult to discover any rational foundation in nature or in politics for the cordial hatred which the Belgians and the Dutch feel for each other, as to give a distinct account of the feuds and jealou-

sies that often exercise the most serious influence upon the happiness of private and domestic life. Their origin and language are nearly the same; and although their habits and pursuits are somewhat different, this is no ground of mutual animosity, since it makes them in reality more necessary and useful to each other. But it seems to be a general law of human nature, that neighbouring nations should hate each other; and indeed if our malignant feelings are to have any exercise at all, it must be upon our neighbours, since those with whom we have no relation whatever, are of course indifferent to us.

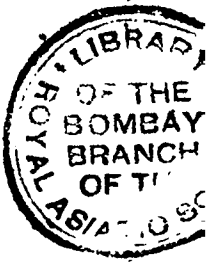
This mutual enmity embitters the internal politics of the new kingdom, and divides the representation of the people into geographical parties upon every considerable question. Nor does it appear in general that the direct interest of either section of the country is promoted by the union. The prosperity of the Dutch depends upon commerce, and they ought perhaps to adopt the most liberal system of trade, in order to make their country as far as possible an emporium for the rest of Europe: but their policy in this particular is opposed by the necessity of proteeting, to a certain extent, the manufactures and agriculture of Belgium. On the other hand, the industry of the Belgians is discouraged by the loss of the vast market of France, as well as by the competition of the British manufactures, which the government, from motives

foreign to the interest of either part of the country, is not sufficiently anxious to prevent. Hence the Belgians look back with regret, and forward with hope, to a union with France; and the downfal of this ill-cemented fabric would probably be the first result of a new convulsion in Europe. The only interest really favoured by the existence of this kingdom is that of British industry, which, from the amicable relations between the two governments, obtains an additional market: and after all that has been said of the importance of the kingdom in maintaining the balance of power on its new footing, it is not improbable that the establishment of it was a mere mercantile speculation on the part of the British ministry, who took much more effectual care of the commerce and industry of their country at the Congress of Vienna, than the opposition in parliament appear to suppose.

The creation of this kingdom has been considered by some politicians, especially Mr. de Pradt, as one of the wisest measures adopted at the Congress. The investigation of this point belongs to another part of this essay; but I may observe here, that as far as the measure produced any effect upon the balance of power, it tended to disturb and not to maintain it—that it proceeded either upon a misconception or a voluntary sacrifice of the true principles of this balance; and that the interest of Europe required, on the contrary, that Belgium should have continued to form a part of France.

The constitution of the Netherlands is liberal and popular, the habits of the people are industrious and moral, and their characters singularly amiable and upright, especially in the northern provinces, where the race is preserved in greater purity. But the country exhibits throughout the melancholy aspect of a decayed and decaying nation. The cities have generally sunk to a third or a fourth of their ancient population, and have lost in still greater proportions their ancient pre-eminence in commerce and industry. The looms of Belgium no longer supply the rich and great of every country in Europe and Asia, with their finest and most elegant garments. Her industry, after planting colonies in Italy and England, has gone to ruin at home; and the fabric of lace and cambric, the last relic of ancient excellence, is sinking very fast. The flag of Holland no longer floats triumphantly in both hemispheres; and the time will never come again when a Dutch admiral shall burn the British fleet at Chatham. Leyden is no longer the western Athens; and the universities whose fame at one time attracted students and professors from all foreign parts, are now not always resorted to by the youth of their own country. The last of the lights of classical learning has just been extinguished by the death of the venerable Wyttenbach; and he seems to have left no successors. Even the glory of those that went before has been struck with premature decay, by the disuse of the

Latin language, to which they had entrusted it; and they have left but obscure traces in literary history. Such is the present state of Holland; and there is much reason to fear that this gradual decline will continue, until the population shall be too scanty to maintain that perpetual contest with the surrounding elements, upon which the existence of the territory depends, and the soil itself shall return to the ocean. But whatever may be its present or its future fate, it will always be interesting to elevated and generous minds, as a spot which was once the favourite abode of freedom, industry, learning, and the arts. The seats of liberty and civilization, like the fine monuments of Grecian architecture, are graceful and attractive even in their ruins.



CHAP. VII.

GREAT BRITAIN.

The country which first gave the example of a free and well regulated government is naturally an object of curiosity and interest to the friends of liberty; and to this distinction Great Britain seems to be fairly entitled. We find in the fierce democracies of Greece and Rome, and in the modern Italian republics, many traces of high spirit and independent feeling, many exhibitions of the loftiest qualities that belong to our nature; characters perhaps that have never been excelled or equalled in England; but the political institutions of these states were all irregular and vicious; and some of the most celebrated of them, as Athens, were also deficient in the necessary resources for embodying the principle of liberty in a powerful and imposing form. The illustrious characters that adorned all these republics, and the charm of poetry and eloquence that has been thrown about them in description, have given a sort of conventional celebrity to their political institutions, which vanishes at the slightest touch of critical examination. Holland is perhaps the country

which has the best right to contest with England the glory of giving the world the first example of a liberal and well regulated constitution; but although the republic of the Seven United Provinces made a nearer approach to the attainment of this object than its predecessors, it was far from reaching it. It was reserved therefore for England to solve this great problem; and to exhibit, for the first time, the phenomenon of a vigorous and permanent political system, founded on the basis of liberty and equality. All the new representative governments on the continent of Europe are avowedly imitations of this; although they have not copied the British constitution in every part, and where they intended to copy have often failed to do it from not understanding the model. In the United States we have brought, as we suppose, the forms of government to still greater perfection; have cleared away many abuses, avoided many errors, and introduced great improvements in the details of administration; but we are still proud and happy to look to Great Britain, as the source from which we derive the spirit and the love of liberty, and from which we have drawn all our political institutions, with the alterations necessary to accommodate them to our situation and habits; and some of the most valuable — as the *habeas corpus* act and trial by jury — without any alteration at all. The American constitution, as was justly remarked by the illustrious Fox, is that of England improved

by the results of the experience of a thousand years. The British islands, therefore, whatever may be the future fate of their inhabitants, will always be reckoned as classical and sacred ground by the friends of liberty; and their history and constitution will ever be studied with singular attention, by all who wish to obtain correct notions of political science.

The greatness and glory to which the British empire has arisen, under the operation of these liberal institutions, furnish one of the strongest proofs of their practicability and intrinsic excellence. To assert that the prosperity of England has been wholly owing to the favourable influence of free government, would perhaps be hazardous. Much of it may justly be attributed to her geographical position, which favoured commercial skill and enterprise, while it afforded security from foreign invasion; and much to the native excellence of the German character, the Saxons and Normans being among the most distinguished branches of this estimable race. But to whatever cause this prosperity may be immediately traced, its existence establishes, in the first place, beyond the possibility of doubt, an important position, which always has been and still is denied by the partisans of despotism, to wit, that a high degree of political power and prosperity is *compatible* with liberal institutions; and as their effect on private happiness is uncontested, this fact alone would decide the question in

their favour. When, however, we consider the vast influence of political institutions in the formation of character, and on the state of social intercourse, of industry, and of property, we shall perhaps feel but little hesitation in referring the success of the British nation almost wholly to the operation, direct and indirect, of these institutions. It is in this particular, principally, that their situation has varied in these latter times from that of the continental branches of the same race; and it is precisely since this difference existed, that they have exhibited so remarkable a superiority in many important respects over these nations; some of whom are at least their equals in natural advantages, and personal qualities. Indeed, the prosperity of England has continued to advance exactly in the same proportion as her government has become more and more liberal. Even in the golden days of good Queen Bess, England was not sorry to be relieved by an intervention of providence, from the attack of the invincible armada. Under the arbitrary government of the Stuarts, she was an isolated and secondary state; though Protestant, she took no part in the thirty years' war, and left it to Sweden to hold the balance of power at the peace of Westphalia. It was not till the government, after the commotions of the commonwealth, and the revolution of 1688, had settled down firmly and permanently upon a liberal basis, that we find the prodigious developement of power and wealth, that has since

been exhibited, beginning to make its appearance. Immediately after this change, the King of England, who was just before a miserable pensioner on the bounty of Louis XIV., carries dismay to the very capital and council of that celebrated monarch; and would perhaps have hurled him from his throne, had there not been a temporary reminiscence of arbitrary times in the cabinet. Ever since, Great Britain has been one of the leading powers in Europe; and during the late struggles succeeded, by the perseverance with which she maintained her position, and the vast pecuniary resources she was able to employ, in withstanding the coalition of all the rest, in breaking up their union, and employing them one against the other, until she finally planted her standard of victory upon the Tuileries, and gave the law to the whole west of Europe. It is far from being my intention to commend this perpetual interference in continental politics, which seems to be a wholly mistaken system when pushed beyond the point where it is absolutely necessary for national defence; but all abuses of power suppose the possession of it. Meanwhile the commercial greatness of the country has risen to such a height during the same interval, that all preceding maritime states dwindle into nothing in comparison; and England has become to the world what Tyre and Carthage, in ancient times, and Venice and Genoa in modern, were to the Mediterranean. Holland alone made

some pretensions to the same universal commerce, but on a much more contracted scale, and for a short period. The United States are already, in this respect, the rivals, and may perhaps be the successors of England. By this vast and lucrative trade, the elegant and the useful arts of life have been proportionably stimulated in all their branches; and wealth has flowed, by a thousand channels, from every corner of the globe, into this industrious and fortunate little island. Such have been the effect and the reward of liberty; for if liberty itself be a blessing, the capacity for it is a virtue.

Notwithstanding this astonishing and unprecedented prosperity, which still continues undiminished for all immediate and practical purposes, it is generally admitted, that the present situation of Great Britain is critical and alarming. Those even who form the most favourable judgment of her future prospects, are far from regarding them as perfectly satisfactory; while such as indulge more easily in gloomy forebodings, imagine her to be already on the brink of inevitable ruin. This danger, as far as it is real, is itself an additional testimony to the value of liberal institutions, because it is a danger resulting from the abuse of the extraordinary power and prosperity which these institutions had created, and it therefore supposes their utility. The crisis which now threatens the safety of England may perhaps be traced, without much fear of error, to a mistaken system of

administration, as its remote and general cause. It is not unnatural for individuals or nations, who feel the consciousness of superior advantages, to waste them in useless and extravagant enterprises. Great Britain, in the pride of wealth and power, has made it a part of her magnificence to take the lead, at vast expence, in general politics. Had she abstained wholly from this sort of intervention, it can hardly be doubted that the resources which have enabled her, as it were, to hold the sceptre of Europe, would have been sufficient to give her perfect independence, and security from attack at home. She would, therefore, on this supposition, have still enjoyed, in an equal degree, the only real advantage which can be alleged as a rational motive for such interference — however different it may be from the causes which actually produce it in practice. In other respects, how much more favourable would have been her position. She would be free from the enormous debt which has been contracted in waging these useless wars. Her establishments, civil and military, would have continued throughout upon a moderate scale; and it would not have been found necessary, in order to raise a sufficient revenue, to impose upon labour the enormous burdens and various restrictions which embarrass it so seriously, and form, with the amount of the debt, the essential difficulty of the present crisis. She would then, in a word, have enjoyed all her actual advantages, and avoided all the evils and dangers which surround and threaten her. If,

therefore, the spirit of the British constitution may well be held up as a fit object of admiration and imitation, the spirit of the British administration, in some of its most important parts, may also be regarded as a salutary warning to other nations, who are or may be tempted, in the consciousness of wealth and power, to run into similar errors. It has sometimes been supposed that this erroneous system might be traced to the remnant of arbitrary forms which still hangs about the British institutions; and the idea is not without plausibility. The European aristocracy have been, from habit and education, too much accustomed to consider politics as a game of chance and skill, played at the expence of subjects, by the several governments, for shares in the mass of political power existing in Europe, rather than as the science of promoting and securing the public good. Hence the department of foreign relations, which in a better system of general politics would be of little importance, means, in practice, the government itself. If this supposition were strictly true, other nations, as the United States, whose institutions are organised in purer and simpler forms, would be less exposed to the danger in question. But, after all, human nature is the same in a republic as in a monarchy; and a spirit of vain glory and extravagance might gain possession of a congress, as well as of a parliament. It is therefore important to establish firmly, as a general axiom, that all

schemes of agrandisement at the expence of other nations, either in the form of influence or of direct conquest, are necessarily as ruinous in their effects as they are unjust in principle. A practical and universal conviction of this truth might serve in some degree as a check upon the disposition to abuse advantages which is natural to all, and from which unfortunately the British government has rarely been exempt.

In remarking on the present state of England, it will not be necessary to enter much into the details of recent facts, which, from the great publicity attending all political affairs in that country, are generally known, both at home and abroad, by all who take an interest in the subject. In the United States, the situation of Great Britain is as much studied, and as well understood, as it is in England itself; and as the British are too busy at home, or too well satisfied of their imagined superiority, to take much interest in the affairs of the United States, we possess, on this account, a considerable advantage on points where the interests of the two countries come into collision. I shall, therefore, suppose the knowledge of facts, and content myself with a few remarks in explanation or illustration of such as appear most important. On a subject, which is continually brought before the public, in every variety of form, by far more powerful pens than mine, I can hardly hope that I shall be able to offer any thing new, or very interesting;

and the whole section might as well be omitted, were it not, in a manner, unsuitable, in a sketch of the general state of Europe, to leave untouched, or to pass over lightly, the country with which we are most immediately connected. Without disparagement to the superior romantic, and chivalrous interest attending the queen's trial, and the king's coronation, the most important points in the internal politics of England, seem to be the present state of the constitution, and the general complaint of distress among the industrious classes; and it is to these that I shall principally confine my remarks.

At a time, when the introduction of representative constitutions, on the model of that of England, forms the leading object of attention in most of the civilized nations of Europe, it is certainly a curious subject of inquiry, whether, as some allege, this government, while it serves as a pattern for so many others, is, itself, on the eve of sinking under the weight of its corruptions and abuses. Such a fact, if it were established, might well render doubtful the expediency of constructing the new constitutions upon the same model; or, at least, would make it proper to ascertain, for the purpose of avoiding them, what had been the weak points which occasioned its decline and fall. That the British constitution is actually in a state of decay and corruption, is an opinion which has been held, to a greater or less extent, by most of the distin-

guished statesmen of the last half century. Pitt and Burke, as well as Fox and Burdett, have at times favoured this idea; and, at the present moment, the doctrine of reform is supported by the wealthiest of the nobles, as well as by the mob of radicals. It is maintained in the Edinburgh Review and Morning Chronicle, as well as in the Black Dwarf and Cobbett's Register; and it is not many years since it was announced by the speaker of the House of Commons from his chair, that the existence of corruption was as clear as the sun at noon-day; and that the present generation treated with indifference, transactions which their ancestors would have turned from with shame and horror. This general consent among individuals and parties, of such various opinions and characters, in favour of the same assertion, necessarily supposes the existence of facts which tend to give it countenance, in some way or other. From all the examination I have been able to give the subject, I am, however, inclined to conclude, that these signs of corruption, which have been so universally remarked and reprobated, are rather indications of a change of the state of property, resulting from causes independent of politics, than of any material alteration that has happened in the principles or practice of the constitution. The effect on the public welfare, of one of these changes, may be nearly the same as of the other; but there is this material difference in the two cases, that in one the

evil might be remedied by a reform of the political institutions, while, on the other, such a change would be wholly ineffectual, and the only real cure would be a reform in the state of property.

It may be remarked in this connection, as rather a singular fact, that on so important a subject as the British constitution, there should exist no work of high reputation and acknowledged authority. Blackstone's Commentaries contain an elegant dissection of the body politic, and a demonstration of all its details, but no attempt even to investigate the principle of life. Delolme, the only writer on the subject who has obtained a certain degree of celebrity, was a foreigner, and published his treatise at the age of twenty-seven. These circumstances excite a strong presumption against its value, which is fully confirmed by perusal. There are no traces in it of a profound or philosophical mind; and it is, after all, rather a book of jurisprudence than of politics. There are several other treatises which, doubtless, have their value; but none that has obtained that stamp of authority, which is always affixed, by the public voice, to works of pre-eminent merit. The chapters devoted to the subject by Montesquieu, in his Spirit of Laws, still the work of a foreigner, however inadequate in extent to the magnitude of the theme, are, notwithstanding, the finest monument which has yet been erected by philosophy to this remarkable poli-

tical phenomenon. A treatise on the British constitution would have formed a noble subject for the leisure of Fox or Burke; and would worthily employ the genius of Mackintosh, if, after publishing his promised history, he should be able to borrow time enough from his important parliamentary labours for such a purpose. This branch of learning, as Sir James himself observes of another, requires the skill of a new builder. I ought to add, that I have not seen the late publication of a distinguished statesman of the school of Fox, Lord John Russell, which may, perhaps, have supplied the deficiency.

If, however, without being biassed by the opinions of statesmen, or the prejudices of parties, we look in detail into the present state of the principal political institutions of the country, we shall find them, I think, in a great measure, sound and healthy. The *habeas corpus* act, and the trial by jury, which are the legal securities of personal liberty in its several branches, including the freedom of the press, are still in full vigour; nor is there any danger of their being attacked. It is true, that the *habeas corpus* act is sometimes suspended, perhaps unnecessarily; and we hear occasional complaints of packed and special juries, which are, probably, not wholly without foundation. But from the frequency with which verdicts are given against the government in political cases, it is evident enough that the spirit of the institution still exists. The liberty of the

press, though nominally restrained somewhat more than it is in the United States, is, in practice, equally extensive, as is clear from the fact, that the abuses of it are infinitely greater than with us. There has never been any appearance in the United States of the blasphemy and sedition which, for several years past, have inundated the British islands in cheap and popular forms. The suppression of such publications is, undoubtedly, an act of substantial justice; and, as it is also done according to the forms of law, there is no ground to regard it as oppression. It seems to be more reprehensible on the score of policy; for the great sensation and scandal, created by these prosecutions, do more, perhaps, to give currency to the infamous productions in question, than any intrinsic attraction belonging to them, since they can rarely be written with talent. The works of Payne may serve as an example. It appears from the proceedings at the trial of the bookseller Carlile, that two or three editions of them have been printed in the United States; a fact which I should not have known without, for I never saw a copy of them in a bookseller's shop in America, and very few in private collections. There is no law, however, to prohibit the printing or the selling of them there; nor would any attempt be made to molest a printer who should undertake it. In point of fact, they are never heard of amongst us, and excite no interest. Their existence would probably have been

forgotten, were it not that from time to time an account arrives in the British papers, of the trial of a bookseller for selling the Age of Reason. I see no cause why a similar system should not produce the same effect in Great Britain; and the operation of the contrary one is far from being equally fortunate. The book, by being continually kept in view, retains its hold upon the public attention. It is read by the people more because the printer has been prosecuted, than for any other reason. At every fresh trial, the most scandalous matter is urged in defence; which must either be repressed by a very unpopular exertion of authority, or be tolerated, with much greater damage to the public than could ever arise from the work itself. Not only this, but the most obnoxious passages of the book form a part of the defence, and are reprinted, upon these occasions, in all the newspapers, and obtain more publicity by this means in a single day, than they could have obtained in a century in their ordinary form. If, by this process, the work were finally suppressed, more might be said in favour of it; but the next bookseller of daring character and desperate fortunes reprints it, and must be indicted with further scandal, and another publication in the newspapers. Can it be seriously maintained, that this is the best way of diverting the public attention from a dangerous work? At the same time, I acquit the British government of tyrannical intention in these proceedings. Such excesses are, in

fact, far more dangerous to liberty, than they are to power. The freedom of the press, within and even beyond the bounds of decency, is unfettered. Journals and books are daily published without notice, which, in France or Germany, would plunge their authors into a dungeon, or bring them to the block. The plan of a preliminary inspection of manuscripts would, I am persuaded, be rejected with as much contempt by the government, as by the opposition. I conclude, that personal liberty, in its several branches, is still protected by all its ancient legal securities; and that, in this essential point, the principles and practice of the constitution have suffered no corruption! Indeed, the last permanent alteration connected with this subject, was the one effected, at the instance of Mr. Fox, in the law of libel, and was highly favourable to liberty.

If, in the next place, we examine the present state of property, a point still more important than the other, because it is the state of property which regulates the practical value of the legal securities of personal liberty, we shall find that, as far as it depends on legal institutions, it is unaltered; or, if altered, that the changes have been all favourable to liberty. The most illiberal feature, and, indeed, almost the only one in the British jurisprudence respecting property, is the feudal law of primogeniture, by which landed estates descend to the eldest son; a rule, by the

bye, which, notwithstanding its illiberality, has been retained in some parts of the United States. This rule, however, is not the growth of modern times. There has been, on the contrary, a steady effort in parliament to break down the feudal restraints on the free circulation of landed property, especially in favour of just creditors. The prodigious developement that has been given to commerce and manufactures within the last century, as well as the creation of the debt, also tend very much to diminish the practical importance of this principle; since all property vested in the public stocks, and a great part of the capital employed in all the branches of industry, follow in their distribution, the more natural and equitable rule of an equal division of estates among the children. It is probable, that in the time of Edward I. the circulation of nine-tenths of the property in the kingdom was obstructed by the feudal restraints on land; whereas, at the present day, it is doubtful whether they operate, in this way, upon more than a tenth, or perhaps a twentieth. In general, therefore, the gradual changes which have occurred in the state of property, as regulated by political institutions, have been favourable, and not adverse, to the cause of liberal principles.

If now we rise from these principles, which constitute the broad and substantial basis of the fabric of British liberty, to the forms of legislation and administration, we shall be satisfied still more easily,

that no unfavourable change has occurred in this part of the political institutions of the kingdom. The modes of legislation and administration are, in form, more important than any other part of the constitution; because the persons or bodies entrusted with these functions possess, ostensibly, the power of regulating and altering all the other institutions, and, with them, the securities of liberty and personal right. Hence, the system of legislation and administration is commonly regarded as the constitution itself. In reality, the importance of this part of the constitution is rather ostensible than real; because the spirit of the government, in all its branches, does not depend so much upon the forms which regulate the making and executing of the laws, as upon the social condition of the people, and especially the state of property. But whatever importance may be attached to this part of the constitution, it is evident enough that no unfavourable change or corruption has taken place in it of late; since the complaint is, that the constitution remains, in this respect, as it was. The general cry for reform supposes, of itself, that the constitution is, in a great measure, unchanged, and, of course, uncorrupted; whereas, in the opinion of the reformers, it stands in need of alteration and amendment. It would seem, therefore, from this general survey of the several parts of the constitution, that the corruption which is admitted to exist, does not reside in the political institutions,

of the country, either substantial or formal, all of which remain very nearly in their ancient state, or, if changed, have been changed in favour of liberty.

It is urged by the reformers, in reply to this course of argument, that although the political institutions remain uncorrupted, a change has occurred in the state of property, and in the condition of the country, which prevents the constitution, in its present form, from securing the liberty of the subject as well as it did in ancient times. Boroughs that were formerly populous, but are now decayed and uninhabited, still send their representatives to parliament; while thriving and wealthy cities, which have grown up in modern times, have no direct share in legislation. Hence the House of Commons, which represented tolerably well the interests which existed when the constitution assumed its present shape, affords no adequate expression of those which exist now. The rapid developement of industry in all its branches, has also thrown into the country a great additional mass of circulating capital, which may be used for the purpose of affecting the elections; and members of parliament, which were anciently the deputies of their fellow citizens, may be now only the creatures of a wealthy proprietor. The population of the country is three or four times as great as it was when the number of members of parliament was fixed, and the representation no longer bears the same proportion that it did to the num-

ber of the citizens. Besides this, the vast increase in the annual expences of the nation, resulting from the great extension given to all the civil and military establishments, and from the augmentation of the debt, has led to a proportionate augmentation of the public revenue, and consequently to a proportionate increase in the influence of the crown. This influence, considering the class of society upon which it operates, and the faculty of distributing honour as well as profit, involved in it, may perhaps be sufficient to neutralize the influence of all the private proprietors in the kingdom; in which case the crown is wholly uncontrolled by any other political power, and the government is substantially a despotism. Thus the Roman government, without any change in its forms, was converted from an irregular democracy into a military despotism.

Admitting for a moment the correctness of these suppositions and conclusions, it may still be asked, how is the evil to be remedied by a reform of the constitution? The evil complained of is the indirect influence of property; but it is a principle, which has long been generally recognized, that property will exercise its influence alike under all forms of government. The effective political power is attached, of necessity, to the influence of the mass of property. Where, as in the United States, this mass is distributed in small portions through the body of the people, so that almost every individual

is a proprietor to a greater or less extent, almost every individual has in consequence a proportionate share of political power; not so much because he possesses the right of suffrage, which is also with us nearly universal, as because he enjoys, by means of his property, a moral independence and a weight in society which gives importance and value to his opinion and his vote; while under other circumstances he might be merely an instrument in the hands of others. If, on the contrary, the state of property be such in England, that a comparatively small portion of the inhabitants possess nearly the whole, and the rest have little or no share in it, it follows of necessity that the former must possess, under any form of goverment, the effective political power. The rest of the population is to a greater or less extent personally dependent upon the proprietors, and must of course act under their influence. A change in the form of elections would make no essential alteration in this state of things. It would be easy to transfer the right of sending members to parliament, from the decayed boroughs to the manufacturing and commercial towns. This right would then be exercised under the direct influence of the wealthy manufacturers and merchants; but as the same influence now operates indirectly to as great an extent at the elections for boroughs, the general result would be the same. The right of suffrage might be made more general, but it may be doubted whether it would therefore be exercised in a more

independent way. A large proprietor would counterbalance, by the votes of his tenants and labourers, the weight of hundreds of smaller ones; and the general result would be, as it is now, determined by the influence of property. Nor does it appear that a reform in the modes of elections would produce any diminution in the influence of the government. The revenue would still remain the same, and the disbursement of it would produce the same general effects as before upon society. It is by this moral operation, and not by direct bribery, that the ministry exercise their influence. The government would still be as great a proprietor as before. In order to diminish its influence, it would be necessary to reduce the debt, and contract the establishments, civil and military. But it may be doubted, whether a reformed parliament would be more likely to adopt this system than the present one; since the parliament, however chosen, would still represent the interest of the proprietors; and the first effect of such a system, as regards the debt, would be the ruin of all the proprietors in the kingdom. The establishments might be contracted without any injury to private property; but as the annual expences are not the most considerable part of the whole, this measure alone would not materially diminish the revenue; and it could not be adopted to any great extent, without abandoning the colonies, resigning to other hands the sceptre of the ocean, and the balance of Europe,

and descending to the condition of an isolated and secondary state. It is not probable that any parliament, reformed or not, in the present situation of British feeling, would encounter these results. Since then the political system of the country, and not the form of elections, places this vast revenue at the disposal of government, a change in the form of elections would in this respect make no difference. In short, if it be admitted as a principle, that a parliament, however chosen, will represent, as it does now, the property of the country; it follows of necessity, that any attempt to change its character is useless, even if the object were desirable, because it could not possibly succeed.

In reality, however, it is neither unjust, nor inexpedient, that in any given state of property, the proprietors should possess the political power; although it is easy to conceive, that one state of property may be infinitely more conducive to the general welfare than another. Nor does it appear that it is a correct description of the present state of things in England to say, as I have supposed the reformers to urge above, that the influence of the crown has been greatly augmented, and that the government is assuming the spirit, if not the form, of despotism. What, in fact, is at present the influence of the crown? The crown is represented by a council of responsible ministers. These ministers must be appointed, and must exercise

their functions in concurrence with the opinion of two legislative bodies, consisting of about fifteen hundred of the largest proprietors and ablest men in the kingdom. These proprietors may be considered as a fair representation of the property of the country; and upon the property of the country is dependent the mass of the population, as tenants and labourers. It is not pretended that the crown can govern in opposition to parliament, that is, to the proprietors; and to think of corrupting the proprietors involves a contradiction in terms. It is not, therefore, the influence of the crown, but the influence of the proprietors, which has been gradually increasing with their property, and which really prevails in the country; and the ministers may as fairly be considered a permanent deputation of parliament as a committee of agents for the crown. In this predominant influence of the proprietors, there is nothing despotic or arbitrary. On the contrary, it is natural, and of course just, that assuming any given state of property, the proprietors constituted by it should in substance govern. The misfortune is, in England, that the state of property does not seem to be the most favourable to the general good that might be imagined. The great influx of wealth, and the consequent activity of commerce and industry, have thrown the soil into the hands of a small number of proprietors, and reduced the mass of the population to a state of complete dependence; which, although they still

enjoy all their ancient securities of liberty and property, differs very little in its moral or political effect from actual servitude. The remedy for this is not a reform in the constitution, but a revolution in the state of property.

If these remarks on the present state of the British constitution are just, it may be concluded that it still exists both in form and substance in its ancient purity; and that if the mass of the people no longer enjoy, in the same degree as they did formerly, the blessings of practical liberty, it is owing to other circumstances, and not to an alteration of the political institutions. The subject may perhaps be further illustrated by a few remarks upon the different parties, which before and since the peace have been most active in demanding a reform in the government.

1. The most numerous and clamorous of these parties is the one which has made its appearance within the last few years, and passes under the name of the *Radicals*. This party has been created by the reaction of the change in the state of property above mentioned, which reduced the lower orders of the people to a state of precarious dependence; and in connection with the effects of the late political events, threw upon the country a vast number of individuals, nearly or quite destitute of employment, and the means of subsistence. That such persons should be uneasy at the existing state of things is a matter of course; and since

in general they are as ignorant as they are wretched, it is equally natural that they should believe those who tell them that a reform in parliament would afford them relief. The small number of prominent characters who have acted as leaders, are from a class of society but little above the mass of their followers, are in general under the operation of the same motives, and equally deficient in intelligence. Hence they may be quite honest in supposing with the rest, that parliamentary reform would cure them of poverty, their real and only disease. One class of these radicals seems, however, to have taken a more distinct view of the state of affairs; and actually pointed out a revolution in property as the suitable remedy. They were called *Spenceans*, from one Spence who wrote several pamphlets on the subject, and acted as the head of this sect. The utter wretchedness and abject poverty of the whole mass of these tumultuous reformers, notwithstanding their numerical force, is sufficiently evident from the extreme smallness of their common resources. A pound or two, or a few shillings, make up the product of a general subscription of the party for political purposes; and the important affair of disbursing and rendering an account of such sums as these, has led repeatedly to public discussions and law-suits among their different agents. Another proof of their entire want of resources, is the contemptible character of all their leaders; for in a country like

England, which is greatly overstocked with cultivated talent, a party so numerous as this, commanding the least resources, would never stand in need of able chiefs, whatever might be its objects. The radicals, on the contrary, have hardly been able to enlist in their cause, a solitary individual of talent or character: for Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Hobhouse, and some other members of the House of Commons, who separate themselves from the whigs, and approach more nearly in their language to the radicals, are still not to be regarded as belonging to that party, with which they never act, and have nothing in common. Hunt and Cobbett are perhaps the only two persons, who can be considered as exceptions to the general poverty of talent. The latter indeed is really a nervous and powerful writer; and in the service of a more formidable party would have been found by the government no contemptible antagonist.

Such are the wretched materials of which the party of radicals is made up; and yet, when we read in the newspapers, the detailed and pompous accounts of the meetings at Spa-fields and at Manchester, and of the triumphal entry of Hunt into the metropolis, attended and followed by an escort of hundreds of thousands, with handkerchiefs waving at the windows, and flowers scattered along the streets, we might almost conclude that the people at large were rising *en masse* to shake off the yoke of some unprincipled tyrant, and that

this notorious demagogue was no other than the hope and saviour of his country. In reality, two thirds of the crowd that assembles upon all these occasions are probably attracted by mere curiosity, and it is this portion only which gives to the meeting its exterior appearance of respectability. Those who really assemble for a political object are as wretched as I have described them; and it was found accordingly, even before these public meetings had been interrupted by law, but after the novelty of the thing had worn off, and they were no longer an object of curiosity, that they excited no attention, even in the heart of London. The last that were held at Smithfield, and other parts of the metropolis, hardly consisted of a few hundred persons, and they exhibited the nucleus of the party in its unsophisticated state of rags and wretchedness. The few contemptible creatures who had officiated as leaders, were all at daggers drawing with each other; and this political farce appears to have nearly arrived at its regular catastrophe, before the finishing stroke was given to it by the prohibitory acts of parliament. It would of course be idle to apprehend any real danger to the state from a party composed of such materials, and under such guidance; and the ministry seem to have over-rated, or purposely exaggerated, its importance, in order to carry their measures with greater ease. Indeed such a gross caricature of liberal principles and proceedings is

really injurious to the cause of freedom; and not to that of power, if regarded as distinct from the former; and if the government were anxious to weaken and bring into discredit the real friends of political improvement, the most effectual way perhaps would be to tolerate and encourage such burlesque reformers as these. When the Hunts and the Watsons had gained possession of the front of the stage, the Foxes and Burkes of the present day would relinquish their claims on the public attention, and retire for a time to the back ground, rather than appear in such company; nor would the living Russells and Sidneys wish to be suspected of co-operating with such worthies as Thistlewood and Monument. There was accordingly an evident suspension of activity among the moderate reformers, during the time when the radicals were most turbulent and busy. At the same time, when the extreme public inconvenience of these tumultuous meetings is taken into view, as well as the danger of their giving occasion to such enterprises as that of Cato-street, it is hardly to be wondered at that the government should have thought it expedient to suppress them. This measure was rather defensible as a matter of police, intended for the comfort and protection of peaceable citizens, than as a provision for the permanent safety of the state.

The doctrines of such a party as this, in points where they differ from the respectable supporters

of liberal principles, are entitled to small attention. Their two leading tenets, *universal suffrage* and *annual parliaments*, could not possibly be introduced, in the present state of property in England, excepting by a revolution. If by possibility they could be introduced in any other way, so sudden and violent a change of forms in such a situation of society, and of property, would probably lead to anarchy and civil war. In the United States, the system of universal suffrage has existed ever since the settlement of the country; and the elections that take place under it are just as tranquil — infinitely more so indeed from other causes, than those upon a different plan in England. It is found to accommodate itself perfectly well to changes in the state of society; property retains its natural and salutary influence in this, as it does in all other systems; and where, in particular points of the territory, there is a tendency towards accumulation of property, it is not found to be counteracted by this system; some of the largest of our cities having given a uniform support to the political party which was considered at the time as that of the rich, from which it appears that the influence of the smaller number of great proprietors residing in these cities, commanded the votes of the much superior number of the other inhabitants. The example of the United States alone is therefore sufficient proof of the abstract practicability of universal suffrage; and even in such a state of

things as now exists in England, it would probably be found perfectly harmless and salutary, had it formed originally a part of the British constitution, and thus had the opportunity of accommodating itself gradually to the modifications that occurred in the state of society. It seems to me, therefore, that it is not on general grounds, but merely as a sudden and violent innovation upon existing forms, that this system is objectionable. All such innovations are in the highest degree dangerous, because it is wholly impossible to calculate their effects; and this alone is a good reason why the doctrine of universal suffrage should be rejected, as it is, by all the rational friends of liberty in Great Britain. The principle of annual parliaments is of less importance. The adoption of it would be attended with some favourable and some unfavourable effects; and perhaps a triennial parliament would, upon the whole, be preferable either to a septennial or an annual one. If, however, the general notions advanced above in regard to the character of the parliament are correct, a contraction of the time of its existence to three years, or even to one, would not essentially alter its spirit. It would still be what it is now, a permanent deputation and representation of the proprietors of the kingdom.

2. The party which assumes the title of whigs, and which is sometimes denominated that of the moderate reformers, stands on very different ground. It consists of a portion of the great proprietors, and

of the ablest and best informed men of the kingdom, not inferior in respectability, either of accidental or personal qualities, to the other portion which holds the reins of government. It may be regarded in fact, for practical purposes, as a check or comptroller of the administration, stationed in parliament to give to every measure, after it has been adopted in the privy council and the cabinet, a last and thorough examination, before it is carried into execution; and this party distributes among its members the control of the several departments of the administration, in the same way that the management of them is distributed among themselves by the ministry. Mr. Wynn serves as a check upon the decisions of the Speaker, and Sir James Mackintosh upon the department of foreign affairs. Mr. Tierney examines the finances, and Mr. Brougham superintends the home department. The administration is thus in a manner double, like the diplomacy of Louis XV.; a second list of volunteers acting as spies upon the real and effective ministers. If the corrections offered by these gentlemen are not always adopted, it must also be allowed that they are not always just; but the certainty that the measures of government will be subjected to a strict scrutiny, by persons of distinguished talents and character, who have made themselves familiar with the details of the several departments, must have a very salutary influence upon the practical administration of affairs, and

must prevent the adoption of any measure that has not been maturely examined. Hence, if there were no political divisions in parliament, it might be advantageous, as a mere matter of expediency, for a number of the ablest members not in the administration, to form an association among themselves for the better discharge of the necessary parliamentary duty of scrutinizing thoroughly all the measures of government. In this point of view, the opposition is neither vexatious nor unnecessary, but extremely useful; although its duty might often be performed with a less exhibition of personal feeling and excitement than is actually shewn, and generally with a less uniform disapprobation of the views of the ministry. If the whigs are considered as forming a political party united in support of different principles, and different interests, from those of the other proprietors represented by the ministry, it will be more difficult to give a satisfactory account of their existence, their opinions, or their practice.

It may be remarked, in the first place, that the claim of this party to the exclusive possession of the title of whigs is extremely questionable. The etymology of this term, as well as that of the opposite party-name of tory, it is well known, is wholly lost; but though there are no traces left of the origin of the name, the history of the real whig party is perfectly well known in all its stages. It was no other than the party of the people, which

resisted the tyranny of Charles I., and finally brought him to the block, which was temporarily suppressed at the return of the Stuarts, which triumphed again at the revolution of 1688, and was at last securely established in the government by the accession of the house of Brunswick, and has held undisturbed possession of it ever since. The tories, on the other hand, through the whole of this period, were the party of the Stuarts and of arbitrary power. At the accession of King William, they lost ostensibly all their weight at court. Under the reign of Queen Anne, their influence revived; the reins of government were held by a tory administration; and had this Princess lived ten or twenty years longer, this party, with the Stuarts at their head, might again have obtained the ascendancy. Her premature death gave a different turn to the course of events, and crushed for ever the hopes of the tories, which only blazed out again before their final extinction in the desperate enterprises of 1714 and 1745. Whatever, therefore, may be the etymology of these names, and at whatever time they may have been applied to the parties to which they respectively belonged, it is certain that the tories were the party of the Stuarts and of arbitrary power, while the whigs were the party of the house of Brunswick and liberty.

When the tories lost their influence at court, in consequence of the revolution of 1688, they became the opposition party, and continued so during the

time of King William, and the early part of the reign of Queen Anne. About four years before her death, they were brought into power, and during this interval, the whigs in their turn took their station on the opposition benches. At the accession of George I. the tables were turned again; and the confidence of the government was given to the whigs. Some of the leading members of the late tory administration were impeached, imprisoned and exiled; and the rest, as a party, assumed the post of opposition. This state of things has continued ever since, not having been interrupted by any subsequent return to power of the tories. The ministerial party of the present day is, therefore, entitled, if one may so speak, by inheritance to the name of whigs, being the lineal descendants and legal representatives of the original whig party, which brought in the house of Brunswick; while the opposition party of the present day, commonly called the whigs, has grown up out of the original tory or Stuart party, and may be considered as their successors. That the principles now held by the opposition are still more liberal than those of the ministry, is sufficiently notorious; and it is at least half a century since the Stuarts had any partisans in Great Britain. In giving this account of the origin of the existing parties, it is, therefore, of course, not my intention to ascribe to the whigs of the present time, an attachment either to the Stuart family or their principles, but merely to

remark, that this division may be traced in the regular succession of events, and of elections, to that which took place in the nation at the accession of George I., when the whigs went into power, and the tories into opposition. An opposition party must hold a liberal language, in order to justify its own existence and proceedings; and accordingly it has happened in other countries, that when a party whose general doctrines were less favourable to liberty has become the opposition, it has immediately assumed, not only a more liberal tone than it held before, but a more liberal one than that of its adversaries, the professedly liberal party. This is now seen in France, where the most decided *ultras* are also the most clamorous advocates of the public liberties, and in particular that of the press. A similar state of things occurred in the United States, when the federalist party went into opposition, at the election of Mr. Jefferson to the presidency. Their favourite subjects of declamation were now constitutional rights and liberty, instead of quiet submission to the public authorities; and, what was really remarkable, they became not long after the strenuous supporters of the privileges and power of states, against those of the general government, in direct contradiction to the original principle of their existence. The course of things was the same in England. The tories, when they became the opposition, became at once the liberal party; while

the whigs, in self-defence, became as naturally the supporters of power. In the progress of events, all who really disapproved of the particular measures of government as arbitrary or impolitic, enlisted in the opposition; and the actual Stuart party becoming extinct, after the unsuccessful issue of the enterprise of Prince Charles Edward, the opposition was at length composed exclusively of these materials. But if the opposition have a right to claim the title of whigs, because they now hold the principles which belonged to that party, the ministerial partisans have a double right to the same appellation, as the representatives by succession of the original whigs, and because, as they doubtless assert, they also retain in all their purity the attachment to the house of Brunswick, and to liberal principles, which formed the real whig creed. Hence the two parties, instead of whigs and tories, might be called with more propriety, the ministerial and the opposition whigs. In fact, the real tory, that is the Stuart party, has long been extinct in England; and I apprehend that no intelligent Englishman of the present day, will accept the appellation of tory, although it is habitually applied to the ministerial partisans by their adversaries, as a term of reproach, and although the former are not always apparently very anxious to shake it off. I ought, perhaps, to except from this remark the ingenious Mr. Hogg, commonly called the Ettrick Shepherd, who, though a partisan of the present administration, not only

admits that they are tories, but maintains, with more consistency perhaps than probability, that the royal family itself is and always has been in the interest of the Stuarts. I have never had an opportunity to converse upon the subject with any intelligent adherent of the ministry who did not claim the title of whig, and reject that of tory as a reproach and a nickname.

This account of the division in question being admitted, and it seems too direct a conclusion from notorious historical facts to be controverted, it follows of necessity, that considering the opposition as a party more liberal than that of the ministry, the division has no sufficient foundation in the condition of the country, or in any corresponding opposition of opinions or interests. In fact, the present institutions are founded on the triumph of liberal principles; and while these institutions continue, it is impossible for any ministry to act intentionally upon a different system; their regular duty being merely to carry into effect and uphold institutions which are essentially liberal. The party in power is of course the party of the existing institutions; and if the existing institutions are liberal, the party in power is of necessity liberal also. It is doubtless within the compass of possibility, that in a country like England, an individual, or a cabal, should form the project of breaking down the existing institutions, and founding a despotic government upon their ruins. But it is

not in human nature that this should be the standing policy of a succession of ministers, holding the government for a long series of years, under a dynasty established on the basis of liberal principles. Since, therefore, the ministerial policy in Great Britain is essentially and necessarily liberal, and since, of consequence, there is no foundation in the condition of the country for a permanent opposition party on liberal principles, it follows of necessity, that this party must have owed its existence originally to accident. This accident, as I have remarked, was the existence of the tory opposition. A permanent opposition party being once created, it assumed, of necessity, the character of a liberal party; but the same circumstances in the condition of the country, which would have prevented it from growing up naturally, also limits very much the field of its operation; which lies, as regard matters of domestic policy, within the narrow compass of the variety of constructions, more or less liberal, that may be given to the same general principles, and the application of these principles to particular circumstances. The abstract opinions of the two parties upon government are substantially the same; and the only questions upon which they differ, are whether particular measures are consistent with these principles, or were on other accounts politic. Their proprietary interests are precisely the same, and they are composed of the same social materials;

they are equally attached to the letter and spirit of the constitution, and equally loyal to the royal family. It is obvious that the line of division between two such parties must be extremely loose and variable; and that the whole business is rather a matter of gentlemanly pastime, than a serious political or personal contention. There are two opposing lines, but their temper and operations are more like those of the two sides of a country dance, than of two hostile armies drawn out in battle array. A tone of good humour and raillery generally predominates in the discussions, and there is the same frequent shifting of sides and of partners, that appears in the ball-room. Nor are the parties so unequally matched as might be supposed, from the circumstance that the opposition has no real foundation in the condition of the country. This party is strong in the respectability and wealth of many of its members; and it is strong, moreover, in the faults of the ministry. Whenever the ministry are in the wrong, the opposition triumph; and from the uncertainty of all human judgments, the cases of this kind are far from being rare. Indeed this party, since it came into being, has principally signalized itself by its determined resistance to two very important systems of policy, the American war, and the wars of the French revolution. Both these classes of measures afforded a very strong ground of attack to a liberal opposition, because they might be repre-

sented with plausibility, as not only impolitic but contrary to liberty; while it is easy to conceive, on the other hand, that they might be adopted from motives of policy by a government substantially liberal. The first of these measures failed completely. The opinions entertained of it by the opposition appeared of course to be justified by the result, and have been confirmed by the judgment of subsequent times. The second met with success not less remarkable and decisive; and the views of the opposition seemed at first to be refuted by the event: but even the short interval that has since elapsed, has already exhibited this course of measures under a new point of view; and their policy must begin to appear very doubtful, even to those who most strongly favoured them at the time.

Such appears to be, in general, the character of the parties in England, and of their relations to each other. It might seem, at first thought, that in a government, founded essentially on liberal principles, the party professing these principles in the most decided form, would naturally command the greatest share of public confidence, possess the preponderating influence in parliament, and consequently obtain the administration. A little reflection however shews, on the contrary, that the exact reverse of this must regularly happen. However truly liberal may be the views and principles of an administration, it is still possible, on every

question, to push these ideas to a greater extent; and as no other ground of opposition can be popular in a liberal government, it follows, of necessity, that all who, from their personal position, or other accidental circumstances, are induced to oppose the measures of government, assume at once a more liberal footing. However popular may be the spirit of the government, that of the opposition will be always more so; and if the opposition itself were to become the government, there would arise, the next day, another party, apparently still more liberal, to oppose them in their turn. Thus, when the whigs or liberal party came into power, at the accession of George I., there sprung up a new opposition, which, though founded on the basis of the tory or Stuart party, became immediately a still more popular party than the whigs. This, like other natural occurrences, has its good and its evil consequences. A liberal opposition is a useful check on the ministry, and a watchful guardian of the public liberties. On the other hand, the ministry are apt to acquire a certain distaste for liberal feelings and principles, from finding them always employed as an engine of opposition, and from knowing that they always will be. On doubtful political questions they are apt to take the unpopular side, which, though defensible and plausible, as both sides of all questions are in the hands of able men, is not the true ground of the administration in a libe-

ral government. This effect is, perhaps, discernible in some degree, in the spirit of the British administration for the last half century; as a single proof of which, among others, may be mentioned the character, already noticed, of the new constitution of Hanover. By what fatality has it happened, that among the German constitutions, the one founded under the auspices of the most liberal government in Europe, is precisely the most illiberal of all? It is, however, the greatest error into which the administration can possibly fall, in a liberal government, to allow this distaste to predominate in their councils, and give a colour to their general system. By placing themselves on unpopular ground, they not only vitiate the practical operation of the constitution, but they voluntarily put themselves in the wrong, and give their adversaries the strong and popular side of the argument. It should be, on the contrary, their standing policy to shew themselves, as they are, the representatives, and not the enemies, of the friends of liberty — to hold a decidedly liberal language, and to take a decidedly liberal ground in all doubtful points of domestic administration, on all questions of foreign policy, and on all general subjects. Such a system would not, probably, for the reason above mentioned, wholly prevent the existence of a liberal opposition; but it would reduce its weight and numbers, disarm it of its strength, and place it regularly in the wrong, by

compelling it always to exhibit itself in a false and exaggerated character.

The complaint of corruption in parliament is of old standing. Sir Robert Walpole, one of the earliest and most remarkable ministers under the first kings of the Brunswick dynasty, was charged by the opposition of his time with employing direct bribery as his principal means of influence; and the gossiping memoirs, lately published, of the events of that period, affect to give the details of this system of bribery, and to name the sums that were paid to this and that individual. There is no appearance of authenticity in these particulars; and when we look at the history of Sir Robert Walpole's administration from a more elevated point of view than that from which it was regarded by the opposition of that day, or the scandal-mongers of the present, we see that such a system was as unnecessary as it would be impracticable. This statesman was at the head of a whig ministry, and the whig interest was completely predominant in the nation. It was with infinite difficulty, and by the use of the most extraordinary means, that the tories, under queen Anne, had been able to maintain, for three or four years, their ascendancy in parliament; and the re-action, after the queen's death, was so strong against them, that they were pursued with a sort of fury, and found it difficult to escape with their heads. Was this a time when it was necessary to secure the predominance of the

whigs by direct bribery? The immense patronage at the disposal of a British minister will, in the nature of things, be always employed as a political instrument; and this is, probably, the extent to which the charge made upon the government of direct corruption, is really true. Walpole does not seem to have been a man of scrupulous conscience or delicate feelings, though a practical statesman of great ability; and he, perhaps, at times made use of his patronage, without much regard for appearances. Burke has drawn the character of this minister with his usual discrimination and felicity; and has rescued it from much of the obloquy that had been thrown upon it by his opponents, and had become attached to it in public opinion.

But though the charge of corruption is of ancient date, the demand for parliamentary reform, as a remedy, is not coeval with it, but began to be heard at a much more recent period. Burke was among the first statesmen who urged the expediency of reform; but the reform which he demanded was *economical*, and not *parliamentary*. He insisted on reductions in the expences of administration, and even descended into some not very dignified details of the domestic economy of the royal family. We hear much in one of his speeches of the *king's turnspit*, a personage who does not appear quite at home upon the floor of parliament. Soon after the American war, however, the subject of par-

liamentary reform began to engage the attention of the principal statesmen; but it does not seem to have excited much interest, until the enthusiasm for liberty, which marked the beginning of the French revolution, had extended itself from France to England. It was then that the cry for reform in parliament first became loud and general, that constitutional societies were formed for the promotion of this object, and that it was looked upon, as it continued to be for a long time, as the leading question in domestic policy. The demand for parliamentary reform was, therefore, not wholly of indigenous origin. If the stock was native, the shoot which was engrafted upon it came from the other side of the channel; and it has generally flourished or decayed in correspondence with the condition of the parent tree. While the zeal for political improvement continued to glow with all its first warmth at Paris, the cause of reform was espoused with equal enthusiasm at London; but when the first prospects of the opening of the revolution had disappeared, the friends of reform in England were also disheartened; the dispute between the parties began to turn upon matters of foreign policy; and although there have since been periods, when the interest felt in this subject has revived in a greater or less degree, it has ceased, upon the whole, to engage the attention of the rational friends of liberty, whether in the ministry or the opposition. Since the business has been

taken up by the radicals, it has almost wholly lost its adherents in the respectable part of the public. The whigs occasionally bring forward in parliament propositions of reform in detail, which are moderate and practicable, which might even be adopted with advantage, but which, if adopted, would make no material alteration in the state of the constitution. The members from Westminster continue to make their annual motion for a thorough reform, and to support it by their annual speech, denouncing the whole political system as a mass of corruption; but the substance of the speech has now been repeated so often, that it requires all the eloquence and high personal respectability of Sir Francis Burdett, to prevent it from being tiresome, if not ridiculous. Upon the whole, the nation seems to have settled down into a quiet satisfaction with the present state of the constitution; and the opinion is becoming general, that the dangers which principally threaten the country are to be found in a different quarter.

If the views of the opposition in parliament, in regard to some very important subjects, have received an apparent confirmation from the final result of the measures that were pursued, the party can also boast the honour of reckoning upon its list of members some of the most distinguished statesmen that ever appeared in England or the world. Not to mention those now living, who would do credit to any party or any nation, it may

be sufficient to cite the illustrious names of Fox and Burke — names that are hardly to be paralleled in the records of British eloquence, philosophy, and patriotism; and which will only be more closely associated in the respect and veneration of future ages, on account of the personal schism which grew up between them, and which forms one of the most interesting parts of their history. Their difference was rather in regard to policy than to principle, both being warm and strenuous friends of liberty; and where they differed, they were both partly right and partly wrong. That Burke was judicious and wise, in discountenancing the too violent spirit of reform which was then spreading through the nation, and threatening ruin to its institutions; and that Fox, in encouraging it, was rather influenced by a generous and unreflecting zeal for freedom, than by motives of sound policy, will now hardly be denied; and the time, perhaps, is not very distant, if it has not already arrived, when it will be admitted with equal unanimity, that the policy of making war upon France, whether for the purpose of crushing the principles of liberty, or, at a subsequent period, of checking the developement of her power, was throughout not only unjust, but imprudent, and eminently unfortunate for the ultimate interest of England; that Burke, by supporting this policy with his fervid and powerful eloquence, was unconsciously doing a serious injury to his country;

and that the system of Fox and his friends and successors in this point, was as politic and prudent, as it was generous and humane. After thirty years of unheard of exertion and unexampled success, the war seems to have ended, by leaving an open field to the ambition of another state, infinitely more formidable and dangerous than France. It may be remarked, however, that this result does not appear to have been foreseen by the opposition any more than by the ministry. It has generally been the fault of the British statesmen of all parties, to regard France merely as a rival state, instead of extending their views to the whole European system, of which France and England are only members, with interests almost wholly in unison.

Fox and Burke, if I may be allowed to dwell a little longer on so pleasing a theme as the characters of these illustrious statesmen, were not less distinguished for amiable personal qualities and intellectual accomplishments, than for commanding eloquence and skill in political science. The friends of Fox dwell with enthusiasm and fond regret upon the cordiality of his manners, and the unalloyed sweetness of his disposition. It is unfortunate, that the pure lustre of these charming virtues was not graced by a sufficient regard for the restraints of private morality. Burke, on the contrary, with an equally kind and social spirit, was a model of perfection in all the relations of

domestic life; his character being at once unsullied by the least stain of excess, and exempt from any shade of rigorism or defect of humour. While his private virtues made the happiness of his family and friends, his conversation was the charm and wonder of the loftiest minds, and the most enlightened circles of society. He was the only man whom Dr. Johnson, a great master of conversation, admitted to be capable of tasking his powers. The only deduction from the uniform excellence of Burke is said to have been the small attraction of his manner in public speaking, a point in which Fox was also not particularly successful, but was reckoned his superior. It would be too rash for an ordinary observer to undertake to give to either of these two mighty minds the palm of original superiority. It can hardly be denied, however, that that of Burke was better disciplined, and more accomplished; and his intellectual reputation, being better supported than that of Fox by written memorials, will probably stand higher with posterity. Had Fox been permitted to finish the historical work which he had begun, he might, perhaps, have bequeathed to future ages a literary monument superior in dignity and lasting value to any thing that remains from the pen of Burke. Both possessed a fine and cultivated taste for the beauties of art and nature; that of Fox seems to have been even more poetical than his illustrious rival's, but he has left no written proofs of it equal to the fine philosophi-

cal Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful. It is but poor praise of this elegant performance, to say, that it is infinitely superior to the Essay of Longinus on the Sublime, from which the hint seems to have been taken, and which nothing but a blind and ignorant admiration of antiquity could have ever exalted into a work of great merit.

A sagacious critic has advanced the opinion that the merit of Burke was almost wholly literary; but I confess I see but little ground for this assertion, if literary excellence is here understood in any other sense than as an immediate result of the highest intellectual and moral endowments. Such compositions as the writings of Burke, suppose, no doubt, the fine taste, the command of language, and the finished education, which are also supposed by every description of literary success; but in the present state of society, these qualities are far from being uncommon, and are possessed by thousands who make no pretensions to the eminence of Burke, in the same degree in which they were by him. Such a writer as Cumberland, for example, who stands infinitely below Burke on the scale of intellect, may yet be regarded as his equal or superior in purely literary accomplishments, taken in this exclusive sense. The style of Burke is undoubtedly one of the most splendid forms in which the English language has ever been exhibited. It displays the happy and difficult union of all the richness and magnificence that good taste admits, with a most flow-

ing ease of construction. In Burke we see the manly movement of a well-bred gentleman. In Johnson, an equally profound and vigorous thinker, the measured march of a grenadier. We forgive the great moralist his stiff and cumbrous phrases, in return for the rich stores of thought and poetry which they conceal; but we admire in Burke, as in a fine antique statue, the grace with which the large flowing robe adapts itself to the majestic dignity of the person. But with all his literary excellence, the peculiar merits of this great man were, perhaps, the faculty of profound and philosophical thought, and the moral courage which led him to disregard personal inconvenience in the expression of his sentiments. Deep thought is the informing soul that everywhere sustains and inspires the imposing grandeur of his eloquence. Even in the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful—the only work of pure literature which he attempted—that is, the only one which was not an immediate expression of his views on important public affairs, there is still the same richness of thought—the same basis of divine philosophy, to support the harmonious superstructure of the language. And the moral courage which formed so remarkable a feature in his character, contributed not less essentially to his literary success. It seems to be a law of nature that the highest degree of eloquence demands the union of the noblest qualities of character as well as intellect. To think is the highest exercise of the mind; to

say what you think, the boldest effort of moral courage; and both these things are required for a really powerful writer. Eloquence without thought is a mere parade of words, and no man can express with spirit and vigour any thoughts but his own. This was the secret of the eloquence of Rousseau, which is not without a certain analogy in its forms to that of Burke. The principal of the Jesuit's college one day enquired of him by what art he had been able to write so well: "I said what I thought," replied the unceremonious Genevan; conveying in these few words the bitterest satire on the system of the Jesuits, and the best explanation of his own.

If by the criticism above alluded to, it be meant that Burke, though an eloquent writer and profound thinker, was not an able practical statesman, the position may be more tenable, at least for the partisans of the school of Fox, but not perhaps ultimately more secure. To form correct conclusions in points of practice, in opposition to the habitual current of his opinions and prejudices, must be considered the highest proof of ability in a practical statesman; and this was done by Burke in regard to the French revolution. As a member of the opposition, and a uniform friend and supporter of liberal principals, he was led by all his habits of thinking, and by all his personal associations, to approve it; and to feel the same excessive desire to introduce its principles in England which prevailed among his political friends. But he had sagacity enough to

see the true interest of his country through the cloud of illusions and associations; and independence enough to proclaim his opinions, with the sacrifice of all his intimate connexions. This was at once the height of practical ability and disinterested patriotism. If he pushed his ideas to exaggeration in regard to foreign affairs, it was still the exaggeration of a system essentially correct in its domestic operation. He was rather a British than a European statesman; but the moment was so critical at home, that he may perhaps be excused for not seeing quite clearly what was right abroad; and it was also not unnatural that he should carry to excess the system to which he had sacrificed his prejudices and his friendships. That the system was not correct in all its parts may be easily admitted; but I think that, in supporting it under the circumstances, he proved great practical ability; and what system was ever adopted in which it was not possible thirty years after to point out faults?

By the side of these celebrated patriots arose another not less distinguished, though his name is hardly surrounded in public opinion with so many amiable and lofty associations—I mean the son of Chatham—the pilot that weathered the storm. Prejudice itself can scarcely refuse to this statesman the praise of transcendant endowments, both intellectual and moral. He had the natural gift of a brilliant and easy elocution—great aptitude for dispatch of business, and a singular facility in seeing

through at a glance, and developing with perfect clearness, the most intricate combinations of politics and finance. He possessed moreover a firmness of purpose, and a determined confidence in his own system, which finally insured its success, and which afford perhaps the strongest proofs he has given of the elevation of his character. It was no secondary statesman who could trust undauntedly to himself, when left as it were alone in Europe, like the tragical Medea abandoned by all the world, and in the confidence of his own resources, could renew his efforts with redoubled vigour. His admirers will hardly venture to ascribe to him the enlarged philosophy or the warmth of heart that belonged to his illustrious colleagues and rivals. The conduct of public affairs was the business of his life; and he neither knew nor cared any thing about other matters. He was born and bred to this; and if he was equal to it, he was also not above it. Philosophy and friendship were to him, in the language of the law, *surplusage*; as Calvinism was to the great Cujas. *Nihil hoc ad edictum prætoris.* And although political affairs are of a higher order, and of more extensive interest than any others, yet when the conduct of them is pursued mechanically, like a mere professional employment, it becomes, like other professions, a matter of *routine* and drudgery. Thus while Burke and Fox appear like beings of a different class, descending from superior regions to interest themselves in the welfare of mor-

tals, Pitt presents himself to the mind as the first of mere politicians, but still as a mere politician like the rest. His eloquence is marked with the stamp of his character. It pursues a clear and rapid course, neither falling below nor rising above the elevation of his habitual themes. No attempt to sound the depths of thought, or soar on the wings of fancy, still less to touch the fine chords of feeling; but all A + B., an elegant solution of political problems very nearly in the manner of algebra. This profuse and interminable flow of words is not in itself either a rare or a remarkable endowment. It is wholly a thing of habit, and is exercised by every village lawyer with various degrees of power and grace. Lord Londonderry, though he wants the elegant correctness of language, as well as the lofty talents of his great predecessor, commands an equally ready and copious elocution. In the estimate of Mr. Pitt's powers, I have not taken into account the errors of his foreign policy, because an erroneous judgment is not always a proof of inferior talents, but often only argues a false position. The misfortune of having countenanced and joined in the crusade against the French, and the merit of having resisted the spirit of revolution at home, belong alike to Pitt and to Burke. The praise of a clearer and more generous view of foreign politics is due to Fox; though his plan was not always bottomed on the most enlarged system of European relations, and although his glory is somewhat clouded by his too

precipitate zeal for political novelties at home. But I have been led too far from my immediate subject in pursuit of these illustrious shades, whose names, unless we see them through a medium of great illusion, will stand much higher on the rolls of fame, than those of their present successors. I must now touch slightly on a less seducing theme, the distresses of the country.

If, as I have supposed, the present state of the constitution is sufficiently satisfactory, and if the country maintains an imposing political attitude, its internal situation, as is generally admitted, is far from being prosperous or agreeable. The complaint of distress has long been loud and general. The decay of industry, in its several branches of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, has been repeatedly noticed in Parliament and from the Throne; and has led to anxious, but hitherto confessedly ineffectual, efforts to find a remedy, or even to discover the precise cause of the evil. The number of the poor has increased to an alarming extent; and the tax for their support now amounts to at least as large a sum as the whole annual expence of the government of the United States. This burden alone presses so heavily upon the landholders, that we hear of estates, of which the entire rent is insufficient to pay the poor rates, and which are consequently abandoned by the owners. Beside this, the amount of the other impositions is enormous; and the restrictions on in-

dustry are numerous and oppressive. How far these burdens contribute to occasion the existing distress is a matter of dispute. By some they are thought to be the principal cause of it; while others imagine that the mischief arises from a sudden change in the political situation of the country. All appear to unite in admitting the extent of the danger, and the difficulty of finding a remedy.

The general and remote cause of this embarrassment is perhaps the change in the state of property, which I have had occasion to allude to before. The vast augmentation of wealth obtained by the class of proprietors, within the last half century, has reduced the labourers to a lower point in the social scale. It has augmented very much the price of all the necessaries of life, without augmenting the wages of labour in proportion; because the increased supply by the augmentation of population has at least kept pace with the increased demand. Hence the labourers have no longer the same command that they had before of the comforts and necessaries of life. They are wholly dependent on the proprietors; and are subject to be thrown out of employment, and reduced to wretchedness, by every change in the state of commerce. England, from being itself a separate nation, has in fact become the metropolitan island of a great universal empire; and for the same reason, that the lower class of the population in a large city is more dependent and wretched than it is in the country,

the mass of the people in England is now more dependent and wretched than it was before. Their misery is a reaction of the great general prosperity of the kingdom; as the number of slaves, that is, the amount of wretchedness, on the estate of a Jamaica planter is an exact measure of the opulence of the master.* The commencement of this state of things was noticed more than half a century ago; and is described by Goldsmith, in the most touching and elegant manner, in his Deserted Village. The picture passed at the time for a mere fancy piece; but experience, as has justly been observed by the most delightful poet of the present day, is far from having proved that the evils he pointed out were either exaggerated or imaginary. The degradation and abject wretchedness of all the lower orders of the people have of late become but too evident; while the overgrown and enormous resources of the great proprietors present an unnatural and hideous contrast with the misery that surrounds them. Industrious families are said to subsist, notwithstanding the high price of the necessaries of life, upon a few shillings a week; while other families monopolise incomes of from 150 to 300,000 pounds; and fortunes descend from father to son, if some late accounts may be believed, of more than thirty millions sterling. Thus the actual amount of wretchedness is, in some measure, hidden from public view, by the princely splendour that encircles the summits of society; as the poisonous

and impassable swamps of Florida are concealed by the colossal magnolia tree, which towers above them to immeasurable heights, and charms the distant spectator with the magnificent richness of its foliage, and the matchless size and beauty of its flowers, perfuming the air for miles around with their delightful odour.

This being the nature of the evil, it is easy to imagine how difficult it is to find a remedy. A change in the state of property would seem to be the most natural one; but as the proprietors are and must be of necessity the lawgivers, it can hardly be supposed that they will give away by law their own estates: nor is there any power in the nation capable of taking them away by force, supposing even that such a measure were expedient. Repeal the corn laws; and at least allow the people, in their present abject misery, to buy their food as cheap as it can be had. This is impossible, as the consequent reduction in the price of produce would ruin the landholders, who are themselves the lawgivers, and will never sign their own death warrant. Reduce the taxes: this can only be done by diminishing the annual expences, or cutting down the debt. The expences are already nearly or quite as low as they can be brought; and a national bankruptcy would still be the ruin of all the proprietors. At least then remove the existing restraints on industry and commerce, and increase the demand for labour by extending as much as possible the market for its

products. This, indeed, appears to be the most plausible suggestion that can be made upon the subject; and has accordingly been urged with great earnestness by the most intelligent statesmen. But even this measure is liable to the objections which may be offered against all important and sudden innovations, that their operation is uncertain, and their results wholly incalculable. In attempting in this way to remedy an existing evil, you may not only fail of success, but may introduce others that are still more alarming. At the same time, the danger of doing nothing, or of doing too little, may be as great, or greater, than that of doing too much. The moment seems to be critical. Delay may produce a fatal explosion; and a *radical* war of extermination may break out and desolate the kingdom. Or, if this should not happen, the body politic, unless something is done to relieve it, may perish by the slower but surer process of decay; and as England has risen by similar means to loftier heights of power and wealth than Holland, it may be only to sink with louder ruin to the gulphs below. At the next war in Europe, we may find her an indifferent spectator or a passive ally, instead of a dictatorial umpire; and there are even already symptoms of such a change to be seen in the character of her present policy with regard to the affairs of Italy and Greece. In so doubtful and delicate a crisis, when it seems to be almost equally dangerous to act, and to abstain from acting, it must

be a very wild and unreflecting ambition which could envy the post of a British minister.

Among the various schemes which have been suggested for the relief of the private distresses, those of Mr. Owen strike most directly at the root of the evil. The only difficulty is, that it is quite impossible to introduce in practice so important an innovation in the state of property. The merit of this gentleman's plan is contested, on grounds independent of its practicability; and especially by an elaborate writer in the Edinburgh Review (No. 64.) who politely intimates, that the projector of such a scheme is a suitable candidate for the insane hospital. Much ridicule is thrown upon the quadrangular form of Mr. Owen's intended villages; but this, though perhaps very ingenious pleasantry, has little to do with the question. The reviewers seem to me not to have seized the precise object which this gentleman's plan is designed to effect. From the superficial and imperfect view I have been able to take of it, I have supposed it to be his object to place the whole territory of Great Britain at the disposition of the whole population, for the purpose of obtaining from it the necessaries and comforts of life. There are in England vast portions of territory, either wholly unoccupied or employed for mere parade and luxury, and there are on the other hand vast numbers of people who are without the means of subsistence, because they are without employment. Let the unemployed hands be placed upon the vacant territory; and whether the soil be

good or bad, they will find no difficulty in getting out of it the means of subsistence. The home market will be extended in proportion to the additional consumption thus created; and the additional quantity of labour will be the fund that pays for the increased quantity of produce. It is in vain to object to this, that the taxes and the restrictions on industry will remain the same as before; and that corn cannot be raised as cheap in England as in some other countries. The foreign corn trade is of course wholly out of the question, in consequence of this last circumstance and of the corn laws; but if the consumption of corn can be increased at home, an additional quantity may be brought to market without diminishing the price, and the same proportional sums may be paid to the landlord for rent and to the government for taxes as before, while the additional quantity raised shall still remain for the consumption of the additional number of labourers. That the consumption of produce would be increased at home by putting the unemployed persons who have now little or nothing to consume upon the unoccupied or unimproved land, and allowing them to consume the fruits of their labour, seems to be as clear as any proposition in arithmetic. And if the persons thus employed can obtain by their labour something more than the worth of the bare means of subsistence, an additional home market will be created for manufactured articles as well as for produce. The error of the reviewer lies in sup-

posing that no land is left unimproved, except such as is of so poor a quality that it would cost more to raise corn upon it than the corn itself would be worth when raised. The land is unimproved partly because, in the present state of the home market for produce, the quantity raised cannot be profitably extended, and partly because the proprietors consult their own pleasure in laying out their grounds more than the public convenience. There is no soil so poor that it will not afford an industrious labourer who plants it with corn or potatoes an abundant subsistence; and if there is now in England sufficient unimproved land to support in this way all the unemployed part of the population, the plans of Mr. Owen, could they be introduced, would be a complete remedy for the distress. The essence of the scheme, if I understand it, does not lie in the division of the country into square villages as these facetious gentlemen suppose; but in the assignment of the vacant territory to the unemployed part of the population.

But whatever may be the extent of the distress in England, or the difficulty of finding any remedies for it which shall be at once practicable and sufficient, it is certain that the symptoms of decline have not yet displayed themselves on the surface; and no country in Europe at the present day, probably none that ever flourished at any preceding period of ancient or of modern times, ever exhibited so strongly the outward marks of general industry,

wealth, and prosperity. The misery that exists, whatever it may be, retires from public view; and the traveller sees no traces of it, except in the beggars, which are not more numerous than they are on the continent, in the courts of justice, and in the newspapers. On the contrary, the impressions he receives from the objects that meet his view are almost uniformly agreeable. He is pleased with the great attention paid to his personal accommodation as a traveller, with the excellent roads, and the convenience of the public carriages and inns. The country every where exhibits the appearance of high cultivation, or else of wild and picturesque beauty; and even the unimproved lands are disposed with taste and skill: so as to embellish the landscape very highly, if they do not contribute as they might to the substantial comfort of the people. From every eminence, extensive parks and grounds, spreading far and wide over hill and vale, interspersed with dark woods, and variegated with bright waters, unroll themselves before the eye, like enchanted gardens. And while the elegant constructions of the modern proprietors fill the mind with images of ease and luxury, the mouldering ruins that remain from former ages of the castles and churches of their feudal ancestors, increase the interest of the picture by contrast, and associate with it poetical and affecting recollections of other times and manners. Every village seems to be the chosen residence of industry, and her hand-

maids, neatness and comfort; and in the various parts of the island her operations present themselves under the most amusing and agreeable variety of forms. Sometimes her votaries are mounting to the skies in manufactories of innumerable stories in height, and sometimes diving in mines into the bowels of the earth, or dragging up drowned treasures from the bottom of the sea. At one time the ornamented grounds of a wealthy proprietor seem to realise the fabled Elysium; and again, as you pass in the evening through some village engaged in the iron manufacture, where a thousand forges are feeding at once their dark red fires, and clouding the air with their volumes of smoke, you might think yourself for a moment a little too near some drearier residence. The aspect of the cities is as various as that of the country. Oxford, in the silent solemn grandeur of its numerous collegiate palaces, with their massy stone walls, and vast interior quadrangles, seems like the deserted capital of some departed race of giants. This is the splendid sepulchre where science, like the Roman Tarpeia, lies buried under the weight of gold that rewarded her ancient services, and where copious libations of the richest Port and Madeira are daily poured out to her memory. At Liverpool, on the contrary, all is bustle, brick, and business; every thing breathes of modern times; every body is occupied with the concerns of the present moment, excepting one elegant scholar, who unites

a singular resemblance to the Roman face and dignified person of our Washington, with the magnificent spirit and intellectual accomplishments of his own Italian hero. At every change in the landscape, you fall upon monuments of some new race of men among the number that have in turn inhabited these islands. The mysterious monument of Stonehenge, standing remote and alone upon a bare and boundless heath, as much unconnected with the events of past ages as it is with the uses of the present, carries you back beyond all historical records, into the obscurity of a wholly unknown period. Perhaps the Druids raised it; but by what machinery could these half barbarians have wrought and moved such immense masses of rock? By what fatality is it, that in every part of the globe the most durable impressions that have been made upon its surface, were the work of races now entirely extinct? Who were the builders of the pyramids, and the massy monuments of Egypt and India? Who constructed the Cyclopean walls of Italy and Greece, or elevated the innumerable and inexplicable mounds which are seen in every part of Europe, Asia, and America; or the ancient forts upon the Ohio, on whose ruins the third growth of trees is now more than four hundred years old? All these constructions have existed through the whole period within the memory of man, and will continue when all the architecture of the present generation, with its high civilization and improved machinery, shall have

crumbled into dust. Stonehenge will remain unchanged when the banks of the Thames shall be as bare as Salisbury heath. But the Romans had something of the spirit of these primitive builders, and they left every where distinct traces of their passage. Half the castles in Great Britain were founded, according to tradition, by Julius Cæsar; and abundant vestiges remain throughout the island of their walls and forts and military roads. Most of their castles have, however, been built upon, and augmented at a later period, and belong with more propriety to the brilliant epoch of the Gothic architecture. Thus the keep of Warwick dates from the time of Cæsar, while the castle itself, with its lofty battlements, extensive walls, and large enclosures, bears witness to the age when every Norman chief was a military despot within his own barony. To this period appertain the principal part of the magnificent Gothic monuments, castles, cathedrals, abbeys, priories, and churches, in various stages of preservation and of ruin; some, like Warwick and Alnwick castles, like Salisbury cathedral and Westminster abbey, in all their original perfection; others, like Kenilworth and Canterbury, little more than a rude mass of earth and rubbish; and others again, in the intermediate stages of decay, borrowing a sort of charm from their very ruin, and putting on their dark green robes of ivy to conceal the ravages of time; as if the luxuriant bounty of nature were purposely throwing a veil over the frailty and

feebleness of art. What a beautiful and brilliant vision was this Gothic architecture, shining out as it did from the deepest darkness of feudal barbarism! And here again, by what fatality has it happened that the moderns, with all their civilization and improved taste, have been as utterly unsuccessful in rivalling the divine simplicity of the Greeks, as the rude grandeur of the Cyclopeans and ancient Egyptians? Since the revival of art in Europe, the builders have confined themselves wholly to a graceless and unsuccessful imitation of ancient models. Strange that the only new architectural conception of any value subsequent to the time of Phidias, should have been struck out at the worst period of society that has since occurred. Sometimes the moderns, in their laborious poverty of invention, heap up small materials in large masses, and think that St. Peter's or St. Paul's will be as much more sublime than the Parthenon, as they are larger: at others, they condescend to a servile imitation of the wild and native graces of the Gothic; as the Chinese, in their stupid ignorance of perspective, can still copy line by line, and point by point, a European picture. But the Norman castles and churches, with all their richness and sublimity, fell with the power of their owners at the rise of the commonwealth. The independents were levellers of substance as well as form, and the material traces they left of their existence, are the ruins of what their predecessors had built. They, too, had an

architecture, but it was not in wood nor in stone. It was enough for them to lay the foundation of the nobler fabric of civil liberty. The effects of the only change in society that has since occurred, are seen in the cultivated fields, the populous and thriving cities, the busy ports, and the general prosperous appearance of the country. All the various aspects that I have mentioned, present themselves in turn; and having gradually succeeded to each other, their contrasts are never too rude, and they harmonize together so as to make up a most agreeable picture. Sometimes, as at Edinburgh, the creations of ancient and of modern days—the old and new towns, have placed themselves very amicably side by side, like Fitzjames and Roderic Dhu; reposing on the same plaid; while at London, the general emporium and central point of the whole system, every variety of origin and social existence is effaced, and all are churned together and coagulated into one uniform, though heterogeneous mass. There is, perhaps, no part of England less agreeable and less English than the metropolis.

The poetical associations connected with all these different objects are equally, perhaps more, interesting to a man of taste and education than the historical ones. This is a charm peculiar to countries which have been long settled and inhabited by a cultivated race, and will be felt in the United States some centuries hence. An extreme sensibility to it is perhaps a proof of an artificial and ex-

aggerated state of feeling; but so is extreme sensibility to natural sublimity and beauty. A common peasant or citizen cares as little for one as for the other. Two thirds of the population within twenty miles of the falls of Niagara, or the Giant's Causeway, have probably never seen them. St. Pierre, in his Studies of Nature, relates an anecdote that illustrates very pleasantly this indifference of the common people to every thing but their immediate pursuits and wants. He was travelling on foot through one of the provinces in France, on a fine spring morning, and overtook a female peasant carrying under her arm two large loaves of bread. His own mind was in a sort of rapturous glow at the beauty of every thing about him, and he could not help expressing it to his fellow traveller. He said to her, "What a pleasant day this is, my good woman, and what a soft refreshing breeze is blowing. How charmingly the nightingales sing in those woods." "Much I care," replied the woman, pointing significantly to the freight she was carrying,—"much I care for such little *yawpers*,—bread is the thing we want." One of the first places where I set foot upon European ground was Elsineur, in Denmark; and I remember that I visited the gardens of Hamlet with as strong a feeling of adoration for the invisible divinity of genius presiding there, as ever a Mahometan pilgrim felt in sweeping out the temple at Mecca; and at a subsequent period I explored the village of Stratford-upon-Avon, and

wrote my name upon the white-washed wall of the little hovel that is called Shakespeare's house, in a sort of intellectual intoxication. Oxford, with all its present inactivity, is one of the most interesting spots upon the globe to a cultivated mind; and if we cannot view it with respect, as the abode of living genius and learning, we approach it with deeper veneration as the monument of the departed great. There are many fine and affecting associations hanging about the monuments in Westminster abbey; although their effect is as much diminished as it could be conveniently by the mode of their position, and I may add execution. After the museum of French monuments at Paris, it would be difficult to imagine any thing more unfortunate. In general, what is called the monument of a great man is one of the most unworthy and inadequate memorials that remain of his existence. The practice of erecting them seems to be a relic of the infancy of civilization, when there was little, if any, communication between different tribes; when literature was in its rudest state, and there was hardly any other means of handing down a name to the next generation, except that of writing it upon a rock. But at the present day, what addition is it to the glory of a great man, which resounds from one quarter of the globe to another, to put together a little tasteless heap of stones or marble, and call it a monument? "The world itself," says Thucydides, "is the monument of illustrious men." Of the multitudes

that repeat the name of David Hume with admiration and respect, how few know any thing of the little structure at Edinburgh which bears that simple and sublime inscription. His monument is in his works. And with all the reproaches which we have heaped upon ourselves for not erecting a suitable monument to Washington, what nobler one does he want, or could he have, than the liberty and happiness of his countrymen? Or if the glory of such a person could be enhanced by applying his name to any material construction, what object is more suitable for this purpose than the capital city of the union? Indeed, there is a strange and unpleasant contrast between the diminutive size of what are commonly called monuments, and the greatness of the objects to which they are consecrated. There is nothing in nature so truly venerable as the memory of a great and good man; but while we devote the most magnificent and expensive structures to the ordinary purposes of life, we satisfy our respect for the dead with a miserable mound of a few feet square. If we must erect such edifices, let them be as grand and as durable as the pyramids, as splendid as the mausoleum, or the tomb of Porsenna;—and after all, the simple record of a good action, or a fine thought, will say more to kindred spirits than the whole put together. A fine statue or picture is a memorial of a different description, and very worthy of its object. It is charming to see the material forms which were once inhabited

by genius and virtue; and a well executed work of this kind is also the best commentary upon the life of the subject. Houdon's inimitable statue of Voltaire throws more light upon his character than all the biographies of him that have ever been written. But I have been led from one thing to another, till I have nearly lost sight of my point of departure, which was the present flourishing situation, to all outward appearance, of the British empire.

There is, however, no essential impropriety in reviewing the poetical and historical recollections associated with the natural scenery of England, in connection with the subject of its present flourishing appearance; since it is a striking and honourable feature in this prosperity, that it has been adorned and ennobled by a great simultaneous developement of intellectual talent. It is true that the period of the highest literary and scientific glory of Great Britain has not precisely coincided with that of her greatest power, wealth, and freedom. The golden age of creative invention in poetry and prose,—the age of Shakespeare, Spenser, Taylor, and Bacon, preceded the birth of liberty. Probably the same secret and inscrutable causes which were then stimulating the people to undertake the great political reforms that soon after occupied their whole attention, gave an extraordinary spring to such minds as by natural genius and education were predisposed to literary efforts. When the

revolution commenced, its paramount interest effaced every other of less immediate importance. Even Milton became a politician; and had the commonwealth continued, would have probably been only Latin secretary of state to the last. It was the temporary triumph of arbitrary power which gave the world the Paradise Lost, and its author his crown of glory. The second age of literary excellence,—the age of high finish and perfection—that of Dryden, Pope, Swift, Addison, and Bolingbroke, coincided with the establishment of liberal institutions. It may be remarked, however, as rather a singular fact, that the preponderance of genius seems to have been at this time on the side of arbitrary power. Of the great men just mentioned, though all took a strong interest in political affairs, one only was a friend of liberty. The nation had thus passed through the two most remarkable epochs of literary progress, before its political importance was fully unfolded; and it seems to be a law of nature, that after the period of invention and that of high polish have arrived and passed away, neither of them ever returns again to the same people. Hence the subsequent epoch of the highest political prosperity of England has not been marked as a literary age by either of these characteristics. There has been little poetical invention, and still less finished execution. Within a few years, indeed, there seems to be an effort to revive the first epoch of original creation in all its

wild and prolific vigor. Much talent has been displayed, and a great temporary effect produced; but the attempt is injudicious, and must finally prove unsuccessful. The careless rudeness of the literary age that precedes fine taste is graceful because it is natural; at any succeeding epoch, this quality is repulsive, because it is unnatural and fantastic. After the sweets of high literary finish have once been tasted by a nation, the proudest genius that follows must bend his neck to the toil required for attaining it, if he means to take his place with the classical authors of his country. But though the English have not, as may well be supposed, inverted the order of nature in their literary progress, their activity in this department has kept pace with their increasing power and wealth. The language has been maintained in its purity by a succession of elegant and powerful writers. The field of history has been explored with singular success, and the works of Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon stand but little, if at all, below the great models which have been handed down to us from antiquity. Johnson, Hume, Smith, and Stewart, have exhibited, like the Platos and Ciceros of old, the delightful union of fine taste with philosophical acuteness and reach of mind; and the written eloquence of Burke is a phenomenon quite unrivalled in modern times.

Whether at the present moment the English have a just right to claim the decided superiority

in literature and science over the other European nations, which they sometimes attribute to themselves, is perhaps rather doubtful. On this head I certainly speak without any adverse interest, for I consider the Americans and English, in a literary view, as forming but one community. But, if we except the present exhibition of poetical talent, which, as I observed just now, presents itself under a questionable form, there seems to be no clear proof of this decided pre-eminence. On the contrary, the activity of her writers has of late taken an unfortunate direction; and pours itself out habitually in critical journals, and other periodical works, which now appear in useless profusion, and instead of being a title of honour to the literature of the country, as some of their contributors seem to suppose, are really both discreditable and injurious to it. The poets are too eager for money, or too ambitious of wild and fantastic novelty, to present any specimens of a finished and classical style. The moral sciences have ceased to be cultivated; except in the single department of political economy, which has received a valuable contribution in the first work of Malthus. Philosophy, properly so called—metaphysical and moral philosophy—the philosophy of man—the noblest and most interesting field of scientific research, has been formally interdicted by the self-created censors of the age; and the injunction has been attended to. The questions

which have always been the favourite subjects of meditation with the greatest minds, and will continue to be to the end of time, are now answered in England with a technical jargon of positive school divinity, or a cynical *cui bono?*—as if the value of truth could be estimated by the rules of arithmetic. Even Mr. Stewart has marked out for himself a very limited space in this field of thought; and the grace and skill with which he treads it, only make one lament the more that he has not given his excursions a wider range. The standard of opinion on these subjects is accordingly far below what it is on the continent; and is really unworthy of so highly cultivated a nation as the English. In general politics there is no work of acknowledged value since the opening of the French revolution; and this is so true, that a late writer in the Edinburgh Review, who has attempted to institute a most favourable comparison between the achievements of his countrymen and the French during this period in every branch of science and literature, being unable to adduce any great political writer, has been compelled to bring into account the British constitution itself: thus falling into a double error; for in the first place the British constitution has not been organized since the year 1789; and if it had, it can hardly be called a literary production. In natural science, there has been more zeal and success; and though the glory of Newton has neither been eclipsed nor

rivalled of late, it is better sustained than that of Bacon and Locke. The standard of this branch of learning is, however, not higher than it is on the continent, nor is the number of eminent men proportionally greater. In descriptions of foreign countries the press of England has been singularly prolific, in consequence of the prodigious extent of her colonial system and commerce; but the contributions from this quarter, of positive scientific and philosophical information, have not been so great as might have been expected. It is accordingly remarked, and not without justice, by an eminent German writer, (A. W. Schlegel,) that the French did more in a single campaign for the antiquities of Egypt, than the British have done for those of India in the half century during which they have now held it. The labours of Humboldt in a different field are more valuable perhaps than those of all the English travellers put together. It is indeed a most surprising and unaccountable fact, considering the great interest of the subject, that the English, during their long abode in Hindostan, should not have entered into a thorough and philosophical investigation of the antiquities of that country; and that it should have been reserved for the Germans, who never set foot there, to discover the community between the Sanscrit and the Teutonic languages. The premature death of the two greatest scholars that ever went out to India, Sir Wm. Jones and Dr. Leyden, is some apology for

this deficiency, though no adequate justification of it. As to the general comparison of the state of literature and science in England and on the continent, it may perhaps be said with safety, that France stands at least as high in both these departments, and Germany higher. But after making all proper abatement from the exaggerated pretensions of some English writers, who are generally not those best able to support such claims by their own productions, there will still remain to England the incontestible praise of great literary and scientific activity and eminence. The country is certainly one of the central points from which the light of knowledge is now distributed through the various regions of the civilized and Christian world.

I reserve for a separate chapter a few remarks on the maritime power and pretensions of England.

CHAP. VIII.

THE BALANCE OF POWER.

The several states of which I have now taken a very imperfect survey, though really independent of each other for the purpose of their internal administration, and nominally for all purposes, have still from their first establishment formed, in substance, one vast and irregular body politic. The community of their origin, languages, and political and religious institutions, but especially their contiguous geographical situation, necessarily created among them very intimate relations of various descriptions. To superintend and control to a certain extent, the relations between individuals, is the object of government; and where all the parties are confessedly subject to the same common institutions, it is accomplished with ease and success. It has been the great misfortune of Europe, that although the several states have always formed, for many important purposes, one political community, they have never acknowledged for these, or any other objects, any common authority. Hence there has always existed a large class of interests, beyond the reach of the existing establishments, in-

tended to adjust conflicting claims, and preserve the public peace. A party, which conceives itself to be injured in an affair belonging to this category, has no common tribunal to appeal to for redress; and must either submit in silence to the supposed wrong, or do itself justice by force. In every conflict of interests, each party being judge in its own case, naturally conceives itself to be in the right; and nothing would prevent a recurrence to force in every such instance but considerations of policy. Hence, whenever there is the least probability that a party, either by its own resources, or by such assistance as it can procure, will be able to obtain any advantage in an open struggle, an appeal to arms is resorted to at once. Perpetual war is, therefore, of necessity, the basis of the international system of a cluster of sovereign states, thus situated in regard to each other. We find, accordingly, that perpetual war has been in practice the basis of their actual relations, from the earliest period up to the present day; and it is now universally received as the leading axiom in what is called *public law*, that nations are *natural enemies* exactly in proportion to the extent of their natural and habitual relations. Through the whole quarter of the globe subject to this system, the nations that border on each other are regarded as natural enemies, because the relations between them are more close and intricate than between any others. Thus the science of practical politics in Europe, instead

of being founded, as is sometimes said, on the same basis with that of morals, proceeds upon a directly opposite principle. Morality, or the law of nature, has established a community of interest and feeling among individuals. It tells them, that they are made to live together, and that their sympathy will increase in proportion to the increasing intimacy of their relations. But the public law of Europe has consecrated the contrary maxim, that nations naturally hate each other; and that the extent of their relations is the precise measure of their mutual hostility. And such is the vice of the European system, that the principle, however odious in theory, is true in fact, and must be admitted and acted upon by every practical politician.

Here then we see demonstrated by contrast in the general European system, still more forcibly, because upon a larger scale, than in the German confederacy, the superiority of the political institutions of the United States; where politics and morals coincide in their foundations, and where between communities, as between individuals, the extent of intercourse is the measure of sympathy and not of hatred. The United States form, like Europe, a vast body politic, composed of independent communities, nearly equal in number to the European; and though now inferior in population, destined probably, at no very distant period, to equal or surpass them in this respect, as well as in the other. But, by the wise and happy institu-

tion of a common government, the conflicting interests between individuals of different states are adjusted in the same easy and quiet way as the rest; and the separate states having no relations with each other, or with foreign powers, in their sovereign capacity, they exist only for the purpose of internal administration. By this simple and excellent provision, an entirely new character is given to the international concerns of these communities. Perpetual peace forms the basis of their relations, instead of perpetual war; and the system which has so long passed for the idle dream of a few benevolent enthusiasts, is actually realised, and exists in full practice through a whole quarter of the globe. It is in the effects of the union, still more than in those of our pure and simple forms of administration, that we immediately feel the great advantages of our political situation. On the other hand, it is principally to the purity and simplicity of these forms, that the union owes its establishment and stability; as it is chiefly the artificial and unnatural form of the European institutions, which stands in the way of a general government there; and fastens upon that continent, as it did upon the communities of ancient Greece, the curse of interminable civil war; a plague which consumed the vital strength of those glorious states, and, unless it can be checked, will, in like manner, ruin Europe.

There was a period in the history of Europe, when the several states exhibited a tendency towards consolidation, upon a plan conformable to the degree of civilization and intelligence which then existed; and had this disposition been sufficiently favoured by the operation of general causes, or of accidental events, affairs might have taken a much more fortunate turn than they did—certainly a very different one. I allude to the epoch of the greatest authority of the catholic church and the pope. At that time Europe was approaching very nearly and very fast to the form of one ecclesiastical commonwealth or theocracy. The jurisdiction of the common government was acknowledged for spiritual purposes by all the states; and it was encroaching rapidly upon the temporal power of the military chiefs, or kings. Some of these even acknowledged themselves the vassals of the church; and permanently held their kingdoms of the pope, as Naples. England, under King John, carried its submission to the same extent. The people, being then throughout Europe in a state of unresisting bondage, took of course no part in the matter, excepting as vassals and mercenary troops; and the question was, which of the two *castes*, ecclesiastical and military, that shared the power between them, should obtain the ultimate ascendancy. Had the clergy prevailed, Europe would have taken the form of a great ecclesiastical

state, like the empire of the Mahometan Caliphs, and that of Japan, during a long period of its history. The precise position which the military chiefs would have held in such an empire, it is now unnecessary to conjecture. These chiefs having finally triumphed, and defeated the power of the clergy, the general body politic retained the form of a cluster of independent nations, under military governments. We now consider their success as necessary and natural, as well as rightful and just; and regard the pretensions of the clergy as an arrogant attempt at usurpation. In reality, if we look more nearly at the elements of power at that time in the possession of the two parties, we may perhaps rather wonder that the scale turned as it did; and it may be very reasonably doubted, whether the success of the clergy would not have been, upon the whole, a much more favourable event. The clergy possessed, in the first place, the immense advantage of forming one community, and acting under one common head; while the military chiefs were all tenacious of their independence, and constantly divided among themselves. Hence the clergy were able to employ them against each other, and thus at once to carry particular points, and to weaken the force of all. The clergy monopolised all the education and intelligence of the age, the military being in general wholly uninformed. They were of course compelled to resort

to the clergy for every purpose requiring intellectual accomplishments, and especially for all ministerial and judicial employments; so that, in reality, they retained no part of the government, except the mere command of the armies. Property, the great element of political power, weighed at least as strongly in favour of the clergy as of the military. They were among the greatest landholders in every part of Europe; and in their judicial capacity they controlled, to a considerable extent, even the property which they did not own. Why these subtle churchmen, with all their superiority of education and intelligence—with all the advantages of union and concert—with so large a share of wealth, and the complete control of the civil administration—with the terrible engine of spiritual power at their disposal, failed to obtain the ascendancy over a *caste* of superstitious barbarians, whom they could, at any time, turn against each other, or send off to the world's end upon a fool's errand, is, I think, an historical problem of rather difficult solution. It is one, however, which it would carry me too far to enter upon here. They certainly made the attempt; and for every purpose, but that of mere form, they succeeded in obtaining the general government of Europe, and holding it for two or three centuries. The crusades were unquestionably a device intended to favour this object; for the popes were never bigots; and in dispatching all the military chiefs on these distant expeditions,

for two or three hundred years in succession, they had something else in view besides the conquest of a sepulchre. They accomplished, in fact, in this way, the double object of relieving themselves from the only check upon their authority at home, while the expedition lasted, and of wasting the resources, and diminishing the effective permanent power of the chiefs. It is a common thing with Protestant, and even philosophical writers, to treat the attempts of the clergy to obtain the ascendancy in Europe, as unjustifiable encroachments upon the temporal authorities; as if the power of these military tyrants had been founded in right, or had tended to promote the public good. Neither party had any such claims as these, nor could either allege the right of possession, which they held in common. The capacity or fitness to govern, the only pretension which could be urged as a substitute, was wholly on the side of the clergy; and I have very little doubt, that their ultimate prevalence would have been a great blessing to Europe. Under a general clerical authority, the military habits which have been the scourge of these nations, would have fallen into disuse. They would have taken the form of one consolidated community, under a government essentially mild and pacific. With the progress of civilization and philosophy, this government would have gradually laid aside its theocratic pretensions, and assumed the aspect of a merely civil institution. Europe

would thus have acquired a political organization, which her enlightened statesmen now anxiously long for, with scarcely a hope of ever obtaining it; and which, should it be realised hereafter, will have been preceded by centuries of civil war and barbarism, that might have been prevented by a different turn of affairs.

This effort at consolidation having failed, the several states remained in form completely independent of each other; and Europe continued to present the spectacle of a great human slaughter house. To make war upon each other was the habitual and only occupation of rulers. These barbarous and unmeaning struggles among petty military sovereigns, were conducted, of course, without any reference to a general political system; but it was natural, when a weaker chief was threatened or attacked by a stronger one, that he should attempt to engage his neighbour to assist him in repelling the aggressor. This course is every where pursued by individuals and nations in all stages of civilization, and is rather the result of mere instinct than of policy or reflection. We find it resorted to, sometimes on a larger and sometimes on a smaller scale, by the European governments, through the whole period of their history; and however unsatisfactory and inadequate, as the basis of a great political system, it is the only substitute which has yet been found in Europe to supply the defect of a general government, and

is now habitually employed for this purpose, under the name of the *Balance of Power.*

The period, however, is not very remote, when this rude contrivance was first applied on a large scale to the general politics of Europe; and the consent of all the powers to this application of it may be regarded as an approach to the great object of consolidation. In the earlier periods of history, the governments were too barbarous to proceed upon large and general views. When Charlemagne was realising a continental empire, more extensive and powerful than any which has since been under the sway of an individual, we do not find that the powers which were out of his reach made any attempts to check his progress by a coalition. The great and good Alfred, then King of England, was on terms of friendship with his ambitious neighbour; although the attack by Charlemagne upon the kindred race of continental Saxons, would have furnished him a sufficient pretext for making war. The Saracens in Spain—the Greek empire—the great Caliph, Aaron the Just, so celebrated for his policy and power—the Russians — the northern kingdoms — all were equally passive; and Charlemagne was left in quiet possession of France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. At a late period, when Charles V. had obtained an empire still more extensive, though less compact, uniting under one sceptre Germany, Spain, the Low Countries, and the

greater part of Italy, with the vast regions of the newly-discovered world, even then, notwithstanding the restless ambition of this prince, there was no systematic attempt by any coalition of the others to check his power. England, indeed, on the short sighted principle of rivalry with France, which has always formed the basis of her foreign policy, was more frequently the ally of Charles in his long wars with Francis than his enemy. The northern kingdoms, the Russians and the Poles, were indifferent as before; and the Turks who had just conquered the Greek Empire had no other political system but that of blind hostility to infidels. Although the peace of Westphalia is generally said to have regulated the balance of power in Europe, the long and bloody struggle which preceded it, was not directed against the preponderating influence of any single state. They were all indeed, at that time, too much distracted by intestine religious wars, to meditate schemes of foreign conquest. On this celebrated occasion, however, the pretensions of the principal European powers, were for the first time adjusted by common consent; and the principle of a balance of power, as now understood and acted upon, may be said to have formed the basis of the treaties then concluded; although the maintenance of such a balance was not the object of the preceding thirty years' war. It is therefore from this period that we may date the adoption of the balance of power as a European

system; and, as I have already observed, the event may be regarded as an approach towards consolidation. The acknowledgment of any tribunal, however irregular, for the settlement of the international concerns of the several states, had a tendency to prepare the public mind for the organization of political arrangements, fitted on rational principles to effect the same object.

The only occasions upon which the new European system was put in practice for the purpose of checking the ambition of a single state, previously to the late coalition against the power of Buonaparte, were the wars of the allies against Louis XIV. Without any settled schemes of extensive conquest, which he had neither the reach of mind to form, nor the military talents to execute, this prince had contracted the troublesome habit of making a campaign every summer against his weaker neighbours; more, as it would appear, for the purpose of exhibiting himself to the ladies of his court in the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war," than for any more serious object. This was good sport to the king and his mistresses; but the Dutch, who were at the expense of it, were less agreeably entertained, and stirred up coalitions against the director of such dangerous amusements. The consequences to the king and his people were extremely serious. The power of France was crippled for a century; and by the universal disorder then introduced into every branch of the administration, the

progress of the approaching revolution was greatly hastened. Louis, but for a mere accident, would have had the opportunity, which has since occurred to his successor, of entertaining his brother sovereigns at the Tuileries; and had the custom prevailed at that time, of condemning crowned heads at the close of a war to imprisonment and exile, he might perhaps have passed the rest of his days at St. Helena. At Utrecht the general international tribunal was again appealed to for the settlement of conflicting claims, and constituted in the same irregular form as before. The wars which intervened between this period and the opening of the French revolution, were not directed against the ambition of single states. That of the Austrian succession was, on the contrary, the result of a joint attempt by several others, to put in practice upon a considerable power, then supposed to be in a feeble situation, the policy which has since been exemplified in the partition of Poland. The king of Prussia came off with great success, and retained secure possession of Silesia, the part which he had assigned himself in the Austrian spoils. By the alliance of England with Austria, the attempts of France and her German allies were defeated. The war of 1756, and the American war, were almost wholly for colonial objects; and no power on either occasion made pretensions to excessive aggrandisement. At the close of all these successive struggles, the international tribunal of a general congress of

ambassadors was regularly resorted to for the final settlement of claims; and adjusted the respective pretensions of the several powers by the treaties of Aix-la-Chapelle and of Paris, in 1763 and 1783. Had the principal states continued for a length of time to preserve the same relative position which they held during this period, it does not seem that it would have been a very violent step to change this irregular and occasional tribunal into a standing congress, and to bring conflicting claims to adjustment without the cost and bloodshed of a preliminary war. The council of Amphictyons in Greece gradually grew up in this way; and may be regarded as the next step in the approach towards a regular general government to the modern balance of power. Indeed, the difference between this latter system, and that of the Amphictyons, or a still more consolidated union, is, in practice, rather formal than material, with the exception of the irrational, and were it not for its bloody barbarity, one might well say, ridiculous prelude of an appeal to arms, which precedes the opening of every session of the congress, as it exists. But while these events passed, others were occurring and maturing, which not only prevented for the time any stricter alliance among the European powers, but altered entirely their relative position and importance.

It was during the wars of the allies with Louis XIV. that the genius of a single man conceived and carried into effect the revolution, which brought

into the European system the gigantic empire of Russia. Before this period, the Russians, now so formidable to the neighbouring states, had found it difficult to maintain their own political existence. They had been subjugated in turn by the Tartars and the Poles; and the Swedes had pushed their conquests far to the southward of the gulph of Finland. The empire had been, indeed, for the greater part of the time, a cluster of independent states, forming of themselves a political system apart from that of Europe, convulsed like the latter by the ceaseless wars of barbarous military chiefs, and wholly untinctured with civilization. The first preparation for the future greatness of Russia was the appearance of one or two of these chiefs, equally barbarous with the rest, but more energetic, who succeeded in combining the several members under one head, and thus infusing into the body a principle of union and vigour. Still the mass remained as before, uninformed by any spark of policy or civilization; and in the natural course of events, the union which had thus been effected, would have been dissolved again at the next change in the person of the ruler. But at that critical period there appeared in this barbarous empire, and in the regular line of succession, one of those master spirits which are destined by character to change the face of the world. This event, so extraordinary that it seems very little short of a miracle, decided the future fate of Russia and of Europe. By the influence of

his genius and example, Peter the Great succeeded, in a single generation, in placing the superior class of his subjects upon a level in intellectual improvement with the most civilized western nations, and by suppressing the Strelitz and the Patriarch, he removed from the empire all existing internal causes of disunion and weakness. A sagacious observer might even then have perceived that a new military power had made its appearance, which was capable of counterbalancing the combined force of all the rest of Europe; and which, by the internal developement of its resources, was constantly adding to its strength and importance. Russia, in fact, from its vast extent and population, and its peculiar political and social institutions, is able to keep on foot constantly, without an effort, a military force fully equal in numerical amount to the union of the greatest armies which all the other powers together can raise by the most painful and ruinous exertions. This enormous force can be augmented at pleasure, as occasion requires, to an indefinite extent. It is under the direction of a *corps* of the most accomplished and intelligent officers in Europe, and it acts as a blind machine at the disposition of a single superior will. There is evidently nothing in Europe capable of making head against such a power as this. Not all Europe combined in opposition will be able to resist its progress, whenever this vast machinery is seriously brought to bear upon the independence of other nations by

an able and ambitious emperor. The civilization of the Russian nobility created a new Macedon in the north of the modern Grecian commonwealths; and it only wants a Philip to be as fatal to the liberty of its neighbours as the other.

The full importance of this political creation was probably not perceived at first; but from the moment that the czar had put his new machinery in motion, its effect was found to be irresistible; and from that day to this, it has not met with a single check of any importance; for the supposed danger from the power of Buonaparte appears by the result, to have been in a great measure imaginary. Peter, while he was creating at home the most gigantic plans of internal improvement, also took measures to make his importance felt at every extremity of the vast political world of which he was the centre. The Swedes, the Poles, the Turks, the Persians, and the Tartars, soon found they had a new neighbour to deal with, and were too happy to abandon the acquisitions they had made in other times, and retire quietly within their own limits. Having completed their internal organization, and secured their territory on all its points, the Russian monarchs began to turn their eyes towards the west; and there is hardly a subsequent political crisis of any importance, in which their influence has not been perceptible, and it has gradually and steadily increased with every succeeding year. In the war of fifty-six, the Russian troops were repeatedly

masters of Berlin; and the fate of Frederic depended principally throughout upon the turn of politics at Petersburgh. Shortly after, the empress Catherine was seen disposing at pleasure of the crown and subsequently of the territory of Poland, the ancient conqueror of her empire: and the great western powers, however alarmed at this portentous usurpation, could not venture to resist it, but were obliged to content themselves with an empty protest. During the American war, the empress placed herself at the head of the famous coalition of all the continental powers of Europe against the maritime ascendancy of England, denominated the *armed neutrality*. Thus the new power was already looked to by all the rest as their avowed leader in a most important political interest. Finally, the same power at two different periods during the late wars decided the course of general politics. Suwarof paralysed for a moment the arm of the French revolution, and if he had not been recalled, would in all probability have advanced to Paris; and Russia was notoriously the soul of the late coalition which effected the ruin of Buonaparte. Meanwhile, during the whole of this period, she has been pushing her conquests in the direction or Turkey and Persia, generally advancing, sometimes stationary, but never on the retreat. The emperor may now be said to hold both these powers in the hollow of his hand; and will occupy their territory whenever he pleases. When Constanti-

nople shall be a Russian port, and Persia a Russian province, what will become of the British empire in India and on the ocean?

This course of events, independently of the recent occurrences to which I shall presently advert, establishes with sufficient evidence the fact of the irresistible preponderance of Russia in the European balance of power. The same point has also been satisfactorily proved by actual experiment during the late wars. The attack made upon this nation by the whole military force of the continent of Europe, under the direction of the most accomplished general that has appeared in modern times, made too under many highly favourable circumstances, was repulsed with perfect success, and ended in the ruin and disgrace of its authors, while Russia came out of the struggle without a wound or a scar. It is next to impossible that any coalition of all the powers of Europe against Russia could ever bring such an imposing mass of military force under such superior discipline and command to bear upon her at once. This campaign may therefore be said to have proved that the greatest array of strength which the continental nations can muster under the greatest advantages is incapable of making the least impression upon this colossus. And when the means at the disposal of such a power for breaking up a coalition and turning its members one against the other are taken into view, there is hardly a possibility that it can ever be the

object of a formidable attack. The creation of this empire may therefore be considered as having unsettled the balance of power in Europe, and made it impossible ever to establish one in future upon the same principles. This consequence is in itself a matter of no great regret to the friends of humanity. The system of a balance of power is essentially rude and barbarous; and the appeal to arms, which it supposes as the regular mode of deciding adverse claims, is better suited to the character of the savages of North America than to that of the christian nations of Europe. It is true that this system appeared, as I have said, to be gradually tending towards something better; and that an acknowledged general government might have grown out of it in time. If the influence of Russia were likely to impede or prevent this result, it ought certainly to be regarded as an evil. But it may well be doubted whether its ultimate tendency will not be rather to favour and accelerate than to oppose it. Omitting however, for the present, any inquiry into this point, and supposing, with all the European politicians, who naturally reason each in the interest of his own particular state, that the preservation of the balance of power is the great object of European politics, the question presents itself, what was the best method to counteract this great evil of the Russian preponderance, and restore, as far as was still possible, the desired balance?

The general answer is obvious. Some great developement of new power in the west of Europe was necessary to counterbalance this tremendous augmentation in the east; and to throw a fresh weight into the scale of the other nations. But how could this be effected? The west of Europe has long been settled and civilized. There were no apparent means of obtaining in this quarter any additional elements of political influence, unless the Atlantic island of Plato could be raised by machinery from the bottom of the ocean, and made to occupy again the space which it formerly filled between Europe and America. This atchievement has not been performed; but the French revolution effected the object in question to an extent which no politician could previously have thought possible, or have ventured to anticipate. By that political regeneration, a kingdom which had become by misgovernment one of the least efficient of the principal powers, was restored almost instantaneously to all its former energy, and even elevated in the course of events to a much loftier height of greatness than it had ever before attained. The augmentation of the power of France, produced by the revolution, was, therefore, an event extremely favourable to the preservation of the general balance; and was indeed precisely the one which ought to have been desired and promoted by every politician who attached any importance to this object. The most fa-

vourable position in which the western nations could be placed for counteracting the influence of Russia would be obtained by making France, the central power and rallying point of the rest, as strong as possible. And could the greatest augmentation which the French empire under Buonaparte ever received, have been effected quietly and without violating the rights of other countries, it probably would, and certainly ought to have been looked upon by them as a great general benefit. Even then the balance of power would have been by no means perfect; because, as I have observed, the whole west of Europe does not possess the materials for counterbalancing Russia; and if it were consolidated into one great empire, it would still be inferior in effective military strength to its great eastern rival. But this augmentation of the powers of France would have greatly improved the existing state of things. With such a centre as the empire of Buonaparte in its greatest extension from Hamburgh to Rome; with such a vanguard as Prussia and Austria, supposing them to feel as they ought, but do not yet appear to do, their community of interest with the other western powers; with Sweden and Denmark on one wing, and Spain, Italy, and Turkey on the other; with the fleets and finances of England to inspire and cement the alliance, there might be some hope of opposing an effective resistance to the common enemy: although from the vice incident to all coalitions, even this

mass of force would still be unequal to that of Russia. But since the only thing that could be done, was to organize the existing materials in the best possible form; and since the keystone of this coalition would necessarily be an energetic central continental power, it was certainly the policy of all the western nations to promote rather than to check the aggrandizement of France. It was more especially the policy of Great Britain, who had nothing to apprehend from that quarter in regard to her own territory.

The subject did not however present itself under this point of view to the other governments; and they thought, or pretended to think, it an essential object of European policy to check the increasing influence of France. In reality, the conduct of the allies towards France through the whole period of the revolution, was probably never regulated with any view to the preservation of the balance of power; and their error rather lay in disregarding this object than in mistaking the proper method of obtaining it. The first coalitions against the French were intended to promote the personal interest of the sovereigns, more than any general political purpose. They were directed against the spirit of liberty rather than the aggrandizement of France. At a subsequent period, when the power of Buonaparte had obtained its full developement, it was doubtless the object of the coalition to check the influence of France as exercised by him; but even

then the immediate object of the war was rather to put an end to the abuse of power by a single unprincipled individual, than to diminish the essential greatness of the nation in which he commanded. But the expediency of favouring and maintaining this augmented greatness, after the abuse of it had been stopped by the deposition of Buonaparte, was either not perceived or disregarded. The opportunity afforded by the French revolution, of strengthening the general balance of power, remained in consequence wholly unimproved. One great cause of this was doubtless the vulgar and senseless ambition of Buonaparte, who could find no other employment for the increased power of France, but that of oppressing and subjugating his weaker neighbours; and thus converting into a great immediate evil, what was of a nature to produce a lasting general benefit. But the allies can hardly be excused for allowing themselves to be so much distracted by this pressing temporary inconvenience, as to lose sight of the real character of their standing policy. England, as I have said, was less excusable for neglecting this policy, because she had less immediate inconvenience to apprehend from the greatness of France. It is much to be feared that she acted throughout upon her habitual short-sighted policy of rivalry with that power; and that under the various pretexts of checking the spirit of disorganization, and of overthrowing a dangerous military despotism, she

was labouring in reality to depress an ancient and accustomed national antagonist. If, as is highly probable, her persevering hostility contributed very much to inflame the ambition of Bonaparte, and urge him on to new attempts, as well as to effect his final overthrow, Europe has very little reason to thank her for her exertions, or to admire her political sagacity.

This view of the policy of Great Britain and the other allies in regard to the French revolution, is, I suspect, at present pretty general among impartial and reflecting men. But supposing it to be incorrect, as far as it is unfavourable; and that this revolution was throughout so strange and anomalous a phenomenon in all its aspects, as to form an exception to the standing rules of European policy, and to require that for the time they should be totally disregarded; supposing this, which is all that the most inveterate anti-revolutionary, or anti-Buonapartean politician can demand, it must still be admitted, that after the fall of Napoleon, the necessity of observing these general principles returned in all its former force, greatly augmented indeed, because the effective power of Russia had been much increased by her successful military efforts during these long wars. Russia was still more dangerous now than she had ever been before; and her prodigious force had been so plainly exhibited as to leave no excuse for overlooking it. It might, therefore, have been reasonably supposed

that the re-organization of the European system, after the close of the war, would have been undertaken with a full view of this danger, and a determination to guard against it by every possible means. A brief review of the political arrangements made at the congress of Vienna, and of the subsequent events connected with the subject, will shew how far such an object was contemplated, and how far it was effected.

The congress of Vienna was the most remarkable session that has ever been held of the irregular international tribunal of Europe—whether we regard the vast variety and extent of the conflicting interests to be adjusted, or the number of illustrious and elevated personages that were present. But this tribunal was never assembled under circumstances more unfavourable to a successful exercise of its functions; and accordingly it has rarely met without producing better results. Two principal causes concurred to prevent this magnificent assembly from accomplishing any object of lasting importance to Europe. The first was the predominant feeling of hostility to France under which it was held; and the second was the presence and irresistible influence of Russia. When we recollect what were the prominent points in the true European system of policy, it is evident enough that it was quite impossible for the congress, placed in such a position, to succeed in establishing it.

The great objects to be effected were in general the three following.

1. To weaken, if possible, the power of Russia —certainly not to strengthen it.

2. To strengthen, if possible, the power of France—certainly not to weaken it.

3. In other arrangements, not immediately affecting these two powers, to keep in view, as much as possible, the general object of diminishing the influence of Russia.

It is clear, at a glance, that in all these points the policy of Europe was opposed by the feelings and composition of the congress; and it accordingly happened that these objects were all either overlooked, or attempted without success; and that a course directly opposite to the true one was pursued upon every point.

1. In restraining the power of Russia, the first and most important object, the congress completely failed; and were compelled, however unwillingly, to sanction a very great augmentation of it. For the demand of such an augmentation, there was really no pretext on the part of the Russian government; and the tenacity with which it insisted upon the annexation of Poland to the empire, must have excited very painful anticipations in the minds of the other powers, in regard to the future policy of this terrible neighbour. The interest of Europe, far from requiring this annexation, rather required

that Russia should abandon the ill-gotten acquisition of Swedish Finland, which had been obtained against every principle of justice and common humanity. But the determined tone which marked the demands of Russia in the congress, proved that the supposed future danger of her preponderance had already become present. There was not only no question of the abandonment of Finland, although the necessity of indemnifying Sweden for its loss was admitted; but the demand of Poland was finally acceded to, and this great kingdom, in the midst of the western powers, was incorporated with Russia. That the measure was in the highest degree impolitic—that it was ruinous to the balance of power—was universally admitted at the congress. It was opposed, as long as there was any prospect that opposition would be effectual, and longer. But what could be done? The power that insisted upon it, was one with which all the rest united could not venture to enter the lists. It was therefore agreed to for the same reason that the occupation of Constantinople to-morrow, or of Persia or Prussia in the next campaign, would be witnessed by the other powers in silence—the very sufficient reason of irresistible compulsion. Upon this first and most important point, therefore, the proceedings of the congress, instead of promoting the general good of Europe, only proved the reality and extent of the dangers that threatened it. It was evident enough that Philip had already taken

his station in the Amphyctionic council. On the other points, their measures were nearly or quite as much in opposition to the public interest, without having, precisely to the same extent, the excuse of unavoidable necessity.

2. The error of augmenting the power of Russia, into which the Congress had been led against its will, rendered still more imperious the duty of providing by every possible means against the danger of her preponderance. The first and most important of these means was to strengthen France, a measure which was also favoured by existing circumstances; and which the Congress might have effected without difficulty, had they seen the importance of it. By sanctioning the union which existed between France and the Belgic provinces, they would have extended very considerably the territorial resources of that kingdom, without doing injustice to any body: as the house of Orange had no claim or pretension whatever upon Belgium, and Austria had no desire to resume it, but preferred an indemnity in Italy. Had the union of Holland with France been also sanctioned, the effect would have been still more favourable for the balance of power; and now that a mild constitutional government has been established in France, a connexion with that country would have probably been agreeable, certainly advantageous to the Dutch. The house of Orange would have been quite satisfied with a pecuniary indemnity; or if not, the pre-

tensions of a single family can hardly be put in competition with the happiness of a nation, and the interests of Europe.

But the Congress, instead of perceiving the necessity of augmenting the power of France, fell into the enormous and unpardonable error of supposing that the principal danger to the general tranquillity was to be found in this quarter; that France was the enemy, and not the protector of the west of Europe; and that it was essential to take all possible precautions against her ambition; the first of which was to strip her of all her late acquisitions. Such is the strength of habitual associations and impressions. The allies, having been for twenty years engaged in coalitions against the French, continued mechanically to pursue the same line of policy as before, and did not remark that the state of circumstances had wholly changed,—that the danger from France had been the result of extraordinary events, which could not possibly occur again,—and, that while they were wasting their strength in building bulwarks along the empty channel of a river which had shifted its course, the whole east of Europe was left unprotected at the mercy of an overwhelming inundation. This was a fatal error in the Congress, and was certainly quite inexcusable; for an assembly of cool and experienced statesmen ought to have been superior to so vulgar an illusion as that of mere habit. By adopting as the basis of many

important measures, the principle of taking precautions against the preponderance of France, they vitiated to the same extent the whole European system. The real evil was overlooked; and in providing against an imaginary one, which no longer existed, they employed their resources to no purpose; and by thus misapplying them, deprived themselves of means, which might have been highly useful in a different quarter. France was not only stripped of her acquisitions, but subjected to heavy pecuniary contributions. A part of these was intended to defray the charges of the campaign; but a large part was destined to be laid out in erecting an expensive line of fortresses along the French frontier. Hundreds of millions have been wasted, and are now wasting, in heaping up these mounds of defence against the memory of Buonaparte and the revolution. The Duke of Wellington makes an annual visit to the continent; and applauds the activity with which the works are pushed, and the ability with which they are constructed. Meanwhile the troops of Russia, and the allies, that now blindly serve her purposes, are pouring at large over the whole south and west of Europe, under the most frivolous pretences, and without meeting a fort or a soldier to oppose them; and the dangerous monarch of France, against whom all these precautions are necessary, is trembling in his palace with the terror of a Russian invasion.

Besides despoiling France of all her late acquisitions, subjecting her to a heavy contribution, and erecting a double line of military works to bridle her ambition, it was thought expedient to add to all these measures the establishment of a new kingdom on her northern frontier, intended expressly, as we are told, for a check upon this unruly and grasping power. Political writers of some note have pronounced the kingdom of the Netherlands to be one of the happiest creations of the Congress. This is perhaps not very high praise; but such as it is, it can only be given under the influence of the same false feeling which dictated the measure. If, as I have supposed, the greatest possible strength of France, consistent with the rights of other states, instead of being dangerous to the balance of power, is its principal and most important element, then the formation of this kingdom purposely to weaken and embarrass France, was a measure essentially and radically vicious in principle. Had the plan, however, been as judicious as it was ill advised, the employment of such means to effect it, would have argued but a small share of political skill. To suppose that a dangerous and encroaching state can be bridled by surrounding it with feeble neighbours, is a conception which could only be formed by a very feeble statesman. Power must be checked by power, and not by weakness. It is just as reasonable in principle to suppose, that the preponderance of Russia will be neutralized by the republic

of Cracow, as that France can be held in guardianship by the kingdom of the Netherlands. If it had been really necessary to take precautions against the French power, it should have been done by bringing up some other state of equal or superior resources into contact with her frontier. Prussia, for example, should have been augmented by the kingdom of Hanover and the whole territory of the Netherlands, as well as the Duchy of the Rhine, so as to form an imposing mass of force upon the northern border of France, capable of bearing the brunt of an attack, and holding her in check, until a diversion could be made in a different quarter. The creation of the kingdom of the Netherlands was a measure as impotent and ineffectual for its professed objects, as these objects themselves were mistaken and injudicious.

In reality, however, it may well be doubted, as I have intimated in a preceding chapter, how far the creation of this kingdom was really intended to serve any important political purpose. Supposing the statesmen at Vienna to have mistaken the principles of European policy, it would be doing them injustice, as men of acknowledged ability, to attribute to them the intention of neutralizing France, by placing in contact with her a state of the second or third rank. The probability is, that the measure was adopted under the influence of Great Britain, and with the view of opening new channels for the products of her industry. From

the intimate political and family relations between the two governments, the market of the Netherlands is thrown open, almost without reserve, to British manufactures; and this additional demand from a wealthy population of more than five millions, is itself no slight advantage. From the peculiar position of the Netherlands, their existence as a separate state, under the patronage of Great Britain, also serves materially to facilitate the passage of British manufactures into the interior of the continent. The accomplishment of these objects seems to have been the real purpose for which the kingdom was created. It is also generally supposed to have been entirely a British conception; and to have been arranged at London before it was suggested at Vienna.

3. Having thus failed in regard to the two great points of general policy, and having assumed as a leading principle the necessity of weakening and embarrassing France, it was of course impossible for the Congress to keep in view the directly opposite principle which I have stated above as the third in importance. Accordingly, no trace can be found in any of the arrangements of a general intention to weaken the influence of Russia. It is one of the great advantages of this power for extending its influence, that it comes in contact with the west of Europe on a long line of frontier, broken up into a variety of separate states, which may be attacked in succession, and turned by influence

against each other. Thus, Prussia may at any time be overrun in a single campaign, as it has been repeatedly by France and Russia. In the rear of this power, is a cluster of small states, independent only in name, as regards their foreign relations; and whose governments wish nothing better than the opportunity of obtaining a little paltry aggrandizement by selling themselves to the highest bidder. Hence, whenever it may suit the purposes of Russia to extend her power in this direction, she can obtain allies without difficulty, in the heart of the enemy's country, to co-operate with her and assist her progress. Already indeed the preliminary arrangements for this purpose have been made, by family connexions with some of the considerable secondary powers, as Wurtemberg and Baden. To foresee and prevent this danger would have been a thing not unworthy the high vocation of the Congress. To do it effectually, the whole of Germany, including Prussia and Austria, should have been consolidated into one vast empire; a measure the more desirable, inasmuch as it would not only have contributed materially to the political security of the western nations, but was called for loudly and imperiously by the interest of the German people, which is now completely sacrificed to the hereditary pretensions of a few families. To these pretensions it was again sacrificed upon this occasion, and with it, the best arrangement which could have been made in this quarter for the security of Europe.

In like manner the security of Europe and the welfare of the people of Italy required that that delightful but unfortunate region should have been delivered from the shameful misgovernment, which has been so long consuming its strength; that the prescriptive pretensions of a few families should have been overlooked, or satisfied by pecuniary indemnities, and the whole country consolidated into one vigorous and powerful state. Such a measure would have been the salvation of Italy, which is now sinking rapidly into hopeless and helpless decrepitude; and it would have introduced a new element of great utility and importance into the general balance of power. These were the measures which were looked for at the hands of the Congress, instead of the union of Poland with Russia, the erection of the kingdom of the Netherlands, or the building of a line of fortresses along the French frontier. No doubt such measures might have justly been called vigorous, perhaps violent; but for what purpose are all the powers of Europe assembled in general congress, if not to take vigorous and violent measures for its public good? It is the high prerogative and peculiar duty of this great tribunal to overlook petty pretensions and slight objects, to do substantial justice every where without regard to form and without respect for persons, and to keep their view fixed steadily upon the only two objects really entitled to the attention of a great European statesman, the welfare of the

people and the security of Europe. By overlooking these great interests, by doing justice to every prescriptive claim that could be made out, however fatal to the general object of the public good, by mistaking the leading principle of European policy, and in consequence of this mistake, vitiating the balance of power in all its important points, the members of the Congress proved either that their intellectual and moral qualities were below their social position; or, which is probably the more correct supposition, that an irregular tribunal of this description is essentially incapable of adjusting the interests that are confided to it.

Still, though the Congress had failed in making the best arrangements against the preponderance of Russia, its errors did not annihilate the materials of power existing in the west of Europe. France, though weakened and embarrassed, was still there, a great and vigorous nation, to form the centre of an anti-Russian coalition. Germany, though disunited and misgoverned, still presented two imposing masses of force on the Russian lines to serve as an advance; and the fleets and finances of England still remained, though impaired, to inspire and cement the alliance. It was only necessary, in order to turn these means to account, that the several powers should have felt their true position, and understood their policy. And if the influence of Russia in the Congress had prevented them at that time from taking the proper measures, it could be

no obstacle to their afterwards adopting in concert, as independent states, whatever schemes of policy they might prefer. The basis of the new European system, under these circumstances, would naturally have been a strict alliance between the three great continental powers, Austria, France, and Prussia, for the purpose of resisting any encroachment from the north. England and the smaller states in the north and south of Europe should also have been parties to the coalition, and co-operated in case of need. And had these powers felt themselves at liberty to overthrow the Turkish empire, and establish in the room of it a powerful Christian state, a new element of great importance would have been introduced into the system; and it would have obtained all the firmness and consistency of which it was susceptible under the circumstances, though still physically and morally inadequate to sustain a decisive struggle with the overwhelming greatness of the common enemy.

By comparing this outline with the course which the several powers have pursued since the congress of Vienna, it is sufficiently obvious that the true policy of Europe has been again completely overlooked; that at the present moment there is no appearance of a balance of power; that Russia is the absolute dictator of the continent, two of the great western states having consented to act as her lieutenants and allies; and that France and England, the two other great western states, are reduced in conse-

quence, as European powers, to the condition of mere nullity. Without entering into much detail in regard to events which are so recent and of so notorious a character, I shall add a few remarks upon them, which will tend, I think, to establish these positions.

The session of the congress had hardly come to a close, when one occurrence took place, which, though not in itself of material importance, afforded a strong proof that the policy of Europe was not likely to take a very fortunate direction. I allude to the conclusion, in the summer of 1815, of the treaty between the emperors of Russia and Austria and the king of Prussia in person, denominated the *Holy Alliance*. The ostensible object of this treaty was to establish a solemn mutual engagement between these sovereigns, to administer the public affairs which they had in charge, in conformity to the Christian religion. As it is well known that the emperor of Russia is, or has been, at times, under the influence of exalted devotional sentiments, there is great reason to suppose that the ostensible object was also the real one, and that the alliance was not formed with any sinister intention. The measure savoured, it is true, rather more of fanaticism than of sound good sense. The Christian religion is not a code either of politics or jurisprudence; and the sovereigns could therefore only mean by this engagement, that they would conform to the spirit of christianity, and do what they believed to

be their duty from religious motives. The expediency of so doing was so perfectly evident before, that it did not apparently require to be enforced or sanctioned by special engagements. A solemn promise on the part of three great monarchs to behave well in future had, in fact, rather the air of a satire upon their own past conduct; and might perhaps have been looked upon as a sort of *amende honorable* for former neglect of duty by themselves and their predecessors. But supposing the treaty not to have concealed any sinister intention, it was still rather good than otherwise, or at least was perfectly harmless. It seems to have been so considered by the other powers who were invited to accede to it, and generally consented. The sovereigns or their ministers probably smiled in secret at the whim of their imperial brother, and thinking themselves fortunate that the caprice of so great a personage had taken so innocent a direction, very readily gave it their countenance. The British government took advantage of a real constitutional difficulty, and refused the king's signature.

The only truly important thing about this treaty was its original shape of a confidential and strict alliance between Russia, Austria, and Prussia. That Russia should wish to form such a union was perfectly natural; but that Austria and Prussia should consent to it, proved either that they considered the measure of no consequence whatever, or that they wholly misconceived their position in

Europe. The basis of their future policy was, as I have already observed, a close alliance with France against the preponderance of Russia; but by this act they abandoned France and the other western powers, and united themselves in a mystical league with the very sovereign from whom they had every thing to apprehend, and against whom it was their chief object to guard. The only apology which the proceeding admitted was the one already intimated, that the treaty was really of no political consequence, being merely an edifying parade of pious language. But had Austria and Prussia perceived, as clearly as they ought to have done, their true position, it may be doubted whether they would have taken part in such a measure, however apparently unmeaning. The alliance of the Giant and the Dwarf carries with it so little either of honour or profit to the weaker party, that there could be no very strong motive for contracting it even in sport. The union, however, not being founded originally upon a community of political interest, was wholly destitute of any principle of stability; and might, under other circumstances, have been shattered to pieces by the first political concussion.

By a singular sort of fatality, there commenced almost immediately after the formation of the alliance a course of important events, which established a community of interest between these three sovereigns, in opposition to that of the other western powers: I allude to the rapid developement

of liberal political principles in all the west of Europe since the close of the war. By these events the governments of Austria and Prussia were placed in a vicious and unfortunate position, both for their own interest and that of Europe. While, as independent nations, they have every thing to apprehend from the predominance of Russia, and every reason to unite with France and the other western powers in a common understanding to check it; as governments, and according to their peculiar political notions, they have equal reason to be alarmed at the spirit which predominates in all the principal western states, and is fast giving a character to their outward forms and national policy. In this respect they have a common interest with Russia; and this danger being apparently more immediate and pressing than the other, they have made no scruple of allying themselves with their great natural enemy, and even availing themselves of his military resources, to repel the inroads of freedom. It was thus that, in the declining period of the Roman empire, the various factions supported their pretensions by the aid of barbarian mercenaries, and gave an easy introduction into the heart of their country to its future conquerors.

In this way the Holy Alliance was converted from an unmeaning parade into a real union, directed against the progress of liberal principles, or, in the language of its members, against *revolution* and *illegitimacy*. Austria and Prussia were detach-

ed from the western states, and firmly united with Russia by an important community of interest; and the only remaining chance of a balance of power was destroyed probably for ever. The alliance having thus acquired a substantial meaning, its form was no longer immaterial. The sovereigns had bound themselves by this treaty to conform to the Christian religion; that is, to do what they believed to be their duty, from religious motives. Whatever particular measures might appear to them expedient, were now to be adopted in a religious spirit; and this spirit not being that of rational and practical religion, but rather an exalted and mystical sort of fanaticism, the necessary consequence was, that as soon as the league had obtained a political object, the parties to it, or at least the Emperor of Russia, pursued this object with all the false zeal and blind obstinacy that fanaticism naturally inspires. The erroneous policy of these powers assumed the most dangerous shape in which intellectual weakness or error can ever exhibit itself; and an alliance originally anti-European, and which had now become illiberal, acquired at the same time a new and unnatural principle of force and activity. I say the alliance, because the Emperor of Russia being the main spring and moving soul of it, the feelings and principles upon which he acts may be said to determine the conduct of all. It is doubtful whether the sovereigns of Prussia and Austria, or their principal ministers, who are per-

sons of much more political importance, share in the fanaticism of the Emperor Alexander. They probably act under the influence of strong political prejudices; and in their anxiety to provide for the security of the existing forms of administration, they overlook the ultimate danger to their own national existence, as well to that of the other western powers, from the course they are pursuing. We see them accordingly promulgate declarations, and adopt measures in the name of religion and *legitimacy* (a word which, taken in a good sense, can only mean *justice*), that not only outrage every principle of justice and humanity, and wholly vitiate the political system of Europe, but strike a fatal blow at their own independence and that of all the western powers.

Thus, at a moment when the preponderance of Russia is more than ever dangerous to the other states, and when the strictest union of all the rest would hardly furnish a sufficient mass of force to resist it with effect, this concurrence of circumstances has detached two of the principal western states from the common cause, and united them closely, by a bond of immediate interest, with the common enemy; has furnished Russia with a pretext for interfering in the politics of the west of Europe, and by presenting this system of interference to the enthusiastic mind of the emperor under the form of an act of religious duty, has impressed upon his character, perhaps naturally unambitious,

a most violent principle of activity and usurpation, Finally, the same circumstances have created in all the countries that are threatened by Russia, excepting England, an internal party, more or less considerable, attached by strong motives of immediate interest to the Russian cause, and opposed to the interest and policy of their own governments. Such is the present state of the balance of power in Europe.

From the moment when this developement of liberal principles began to exhibit itself, the great extension of influence which Russia would derive from it under the present circumstances, was also made apparent. A course of friendly counsel to other powers was immediately entered upon by her representatives at all the courts in Europe. The emperor employed his leisure in digesting materials for a pamphlet of friendly advice to the Germans upon the state of their universities. Prussia was advised in a friendly way not to fulfil her promise of a constitution. The deputies of the Spanish nation, which had taken the liberty to reform its government without consulting Russia, were advised in a friendly manner to disavow all their proceedings, to admit that they had proved themselves to be knaves and fools, and that nobody but the Emperor Alexander knew any thing about politics. The King of France was advised in a friendly manner not to govern in the spirit of the institutions which he had himself established with the approbation of his

imperial majesty, but to give his confidence to a faction, whose views were adverse to the public good, although very friendly to the interests of Russia. Such, indeed, is the force of habit, that the emperor extended his system of friendly advice across the Atlantic; and this most pacific sovereign, at the head of a peace establishment of only 800,000 bayonets, thought it necessary to caution the rapacious and warlike cabinet of Washington, which had then an army of no less than 8000 men on foot, not to plunge inconsiderately into hostilities with Spain. Such were the first symptoms of this pretension to universal supremacy, which has since been put in force in regard to Naples and Sardinia; and, what is still more extraordinary, has been publicly and ostentatiously avowed at the congresses of Troppau and Laybach.

When the invasion of Naples by the Austrians was under consideration in the British parliament, the ministry, who were obliged to defend, in the most plausible way they could, the passive policy imposed upon them by necessity, pretended to maintain that the proceedings of Austria might be justifiable on the ground of the danger to her dominion in Italy from the establishment of a liberal government at Naples. The futility and absurdity of this system of defence are so obvious, and have been so fully exposed in every form, that it is needless to refute it here. But it is necessary to remark, in order to have a correct view of the policy and pretensions of the allies, that this was not

the argument employed by them to justify their proceedings. In their public declarations from Troppau and Laybach they assert, on the contrary, in unqualified terms, the right on general principles of putting down revolution, wherever it displays itself in other independent nations; and they constitute themselves the judges of the existence of the case. This is neither more nor less than an assertion by these allies of the right of sovereignty over the whole of Europe: and when we consider that Prussia has been a passive and probably reluctant party to the alliance; and that Austria could not have ventured to stir a step in these proceedings without the assurance of support from Russia; while Russia, on the contrary, acts with perfect independence, and is the real soul of the league; when we consider these circumstances, it is impossible not to perceive that the assertion amounts to a claim by Russia of universal supremacy. The only qualification to the claim admitted by the language of these declarations, is the right of governments, as they are now constituted, to introduce, of their own accord, political improvements; in which case, it seems, the Emperor would condescend not to interfere. But even this slender restriction is withdrawn by the practical commentary upon the language of the allies, afforded by their actual proceedings in regard to Naples. Here the king displayed every appearance of cordially approving the revolution: and could not be brought even at Laybach, to express a different opinion.

Under these circumstances, the pretensions of the allies took the following form: "If, in a case of revolution, the king disapproves the proceedings, we claim the right of interfering in his defence. If the king approves them, however completely he may be out of danger, he must be considered as acting under compulsion, and the right of interference remains." So that the only case of reform in which they do not claim the right of interference, is that in which they happen to approve themselves the character of the innovation. In other words, they say to foreign powers: "You are at perfect liberty to do what we like; but you shall not do what we do not like." This seems equivalent to a declaration of sovereignty. It must have been, as it was, peculiarly offensive to the British government and people; for the "glorious" revolution of 1688, by which the constitution assumed its present shape, was very similar in spirit and form to that of Naples.

It may be said, that this claim of sovereignty extends only to a single point, and that in every other matter, but that of reform, the nations retain their independence. But the right of giving the law to foreign powers in regard to one important subject can only be deduced from that of general sovereignty; and the nation which permits another to prescribe its conduct in one particular, has forfeited its honour and its independence, as much as if it had formally passed under the yoke. Beside this, the subject of political reform, in the present state of pub-

lic opinion in Europe, involves in itself the whole government, as that of the religious reformation did at a former period. In every country the political world is divided into two parties in regard to this subject; and according as one or the other of these parties prevails, the whole system of administration assumes a different aspect. The pretension of Russia and her allies to give the law to foreign nations in regard to political reform, amounts to the claim of a *right* to determine which of these two parties shall have the ascendancy, and consequently which of two adverse modes of feeling and thinking on political subjects shall pervade the whole administration. It amounts, in other words, to the pretension to regulate at pleasure the whole domestic and foreign policy of the other nominally independent states.

A claim so odious as this, would not have been publicly avowed, unless the parties that made it were conscious of the ability to put it in force; and it is accordingly obvious, upon a view of the prevailing policy, foreign and domestic, of the several principal cabinets in the west of Europe, that the terror of the Russian arms exercises a powerful action upon the minds of their members. The cooperation of Prussia in the league is probably itself an effect of this terror; and there is no reasonable way of accounting for the breach of faith and strange vacillation of this government in regard to the constitution, unless we attribute it to the efforts of an aristocratic party, not sufficiently powerful in itself to resist the public opinion of this intelli-

gent and high minded nation, but deriving force enough from the support of Austria and Russia to defeat the hopes of the people, and probably the sincere intentions and wishes of the government. The ascendancy of the emigrant party in France, although it has been favoured by the personal position of the royal family, is in substance, as I have observed before, the result of foreign influence, that is, of the influence of Russia. All parties in France know perfectly well that the occurrence of any movement, which could plausibly be treated as a revolution, would be followed at once by another general inroad from the north; and they also remember the friendly assurance given by the powers at their last invasion, that at the next visit, they should proceed *à la mode de Pologne*, and divide the territory. While, therefore, the necessity of conciliating these terrible neighbours has been the great motive with the government in giving an anti-national and illiberal colouring to their whole policy, the apprehension of another invasion, followed by results still more fatal than those of the former ones, is probably the principal reason why the nation has submitted so quietly to this system; and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that at this moment the Cossacks are the ruling power in France. The insular position and maritime strength of England exempt her for the present from this domestic interference; although it has been hinted that during the queen's trial the influence of Russia was employed for the purpose of keeping the ministry in

place. Whether this be true or not, England, in her internal affairs, is still substantially independent.

In regard to her foreign policy, however, the case is quite different; and the most remarkable symptom, which has appeared, of the ascendancy of Russia in the west of Europe, was the passive unconcern with which France and England looked on during the late events in Italy. These powers had every possible reason for opposing with decision the proceedings of Austria and Russia. The revolutions in Italy, and the consolidation of the Italian states into one powerful body politic, which would have been their result had they been left to pursue their natural course, besides effectually promoting the interest of the Italian people, were events highly favourable to the balance of power in Europe, and well calculated to check the influence of Russia. The British ministry evidently viewed the conduct of the allies in its true light; and it would be doing them injustice, as men of ability, to suppose that they were really deceived themselves by the slight appearance of plausibility which they were able to give to their policy in parliament, on principles too which the allies themselves did not pretend to assert. The real justification, as well as the real cause of this neutrality, both in France and England, was the impossibility of opposing any effectual resistance to the determinations of the allies. It was the wholesome terror of the Cossacks, which at once backed the progress of the Austrian arms in Italy, and neutralised the resistance of the

cabinets of London and Paris. France had even a still stronger interest than England in supporting the Italians, on account of her continental position, which makes the preservation of a balance of power much more important to her safety. And, accordingly the reaction of public opinion in France against the neutrality of the cabinet was so strong, that it was on the eve, at one moment, of producing a new revolution there, or at least a complete change in the policy of the government. Had the cause of liberty been well supported at Naples, this result would unquestionably have happened; and not improbably a similar one in Belgium, Prussia, and some other parts of Germany. In this case a general struggle for life and death between the governments of the east and the nations of the west of Europe would have followed; and the battle of independence, which must come sooner or later, would have been fought at once, and perhaps under circumstances more favourable to the success of the western powers than may soon occur again. The cowardice and treachery of the Neapolitans, and the terror of Russia, which paralysed the cabinets of France and England, gave a different turn to these events, and left the great final struggle to future years, perhaps to future generations.

It only remains, in order to complete the view of the balance of power as it exists, or rather, as it does not exist at present, to inquire what probability there is of a change in this state of things which I have been describing; what means are still at the

disposition of the western powers, for resisting the preponderance of Russia; and what are the chances that they will be employed in the best possible way. Although Russia already rules in the west by terror, she does not yet rule by actual force. If the influence of the Cossacks is felt in France, their tents are not permanently pitched in the Elysian fields. The war of western independence is still, as I have said, to be fought; and until it has been actually fought and decided in favour of Russia, there will still be room for hope, and a chance of success for the other powers; because, if we even suppose their materials of resistance to be in themselves wholly inadequate, they have still in their favour the possibility of some fortunate occurrence of an accidental character. Accidents, however, being, as such, beyond the reach of anticipation, it is only upon an estimate of the existing materials of resistance, as they will probably be employed, that any calculation can be formed upon the subject; and the chance of success for the western powers, founded upon any such calculations, appears at present to be extremely small. What these materials are, has already been stated in a general way. The basis of the true European system has been shewn to be, a strict alliance between the three great continental powers, and the co-operation of Great Britain and the states of a secondary order. This system is, as I have already observed, completely vitiated at present by the unnatural and anti-european union of Austria and Prussia with Russia. For if Russia

alone is more than a match for all the rest of Europe together, it is evident enough that when she is aided by Prussia as a passive ally, and Austria as an active one, the latter carrying with her the effective command of the whole of Germany and Italy, the possibility of resistance by the remaining western powers is entirely out of the question. If therefore there is any chance of a restoration of the balance of power, it can only be in consequence of the detachment of Austria and Prussia from the triple alliance. But this event is highly improbable; for the same cause which created or rather consolidated this alliance, will continue to operate for a long time with increasing force, and, as long as it operates, will of necessity prevent the dissolution of the treaty.

Notwithstanding the persecution to which the liberal political opinions are now exposed on the continent of Europe, there is very little doubt that they will continue to gain ground among the people. This very persecution is, in fact, one of the principal causes which will promote their progress: and as it is pushed to a greater excess in Germany than it is any where else, so it is in Germany that the progress of liberal opinions will be most rapid. This circumstance might at first view appear very favourable to the independence of the western powers, since if all the German states, including Austria, assumed a decidedly liberal political aspect, it may be supposed, that they would fall off from the Russian alliance, and attach themselves

to the constitutional states in the west. And in reality this would be the case if the principles of liberty could be brought into operation instantaneously in every part of Germany, and the governments of the several states be changed in the twinkling of an eye, without there being any possibility of the interference of Russia in the events connected with such a change. But this being impossible, and it being certain, on the contrary, that such a result, though rapidly approaching, must still be preceded by an intervening period of disunion, and of bitter and obstinate struggles between contending factions for ascendancy in the several states, it is evident that the developement of liberal principles in Germany will tend to strengthen the influence of Russia in the west of Europe, and to draw more close instead of loosening the bonds of the triple alliance. This influence already operates so strongly in Germany as to prevent the quiet and natural ascendancy of liberal principles, and to leave them no other form in which to display their force, except that of violent explosions or revolutions. Such events therefore are quite probable; but their results would be ruinous instead of favorable to the independence of the nations where they occurred. Suppose, for example, an explosion to occur in Prussia; suppose that the late attempt to effect a military revolution there, on the model of that of Spain, had succeeded, what would have been the consequence? Not that Prussia would have fallen off from the triple alliance

and strengthened the influence of the west; but that a Russian army would immediately have marched into Berlin, and that the emperor would rule there by actual force, as he now rules by terror. If, by possibility, and in the progress of time and events, a similar explosion could be expected in Austria, the result would be precisely the same. In Austria, however, there is at present no enthusiasm for liberty, and there is no probability of any attempt at revolution there for a long time to come. The whole north and west of Germany will have been distracted by these internal agitations, and have been thrown by them under the dictation of Russia, long before the epoch of freedom arrives in Austria.

Thus there appears to be very little probability that Austria and Prussia will be detached from the triple alliance, and consequently that the balance of power will ever be restored. Thus by a singular fatality the progress of the principles of liberty, so hostile in their character to those of the Russian government, is itself one of the circumstances most favourable to the influence of this government over the western powers. It furnishes at once a pretext for interference in the affairs of these powers, and an infallible means of sowing among them and in their bosoms the seeds of distraction and disunion, the only thing necessary to insure the victory of any single great power over any coalition, however extensive and formidable. Inflamed by persecu-

tion, the friends of liberty in the several countries will finally lose their patience and their prudence, and be hurried into attempts at revolution. Under pretence of checking these attempts, the Russian garrisons will advance from capital to capital, as their terror has already spread itself from cabinet to cabinet, and should the disorderly materials now fermenting in England burst out into open insurrection, we may see at last the two-headed eagle extend his wings and unfurl his charts triumphantly over the tower of London itself.

Had the western powers understood their policy better, and were they united among themselves in such a way as to enable them to derive the greatest possible advantage from accidental circumstances, the present commotions in Turkey would have afforded them an excellent opportunity to strengthen the western and constitutional interest, and to obtain an important check upon the Russian power, by erecting a new Greek empire at Constantinople. The late diabolical outrages of the Turks upon the christian inhabitants of their territory, not only furnish a good pretext for other powers to interfere, but make it the bounden duty of the neighbouring nations, as men and christians, to rescue their fellow-men and fellow-christians from this horrible tyranny. I consider it as much incumbent upon the European powers to unite at last and expel this horde of ruthless and bloody barbarians from Greece, as it would be upon any regular government to dis-

lodge and break up an association of professed highwaymen. Having taken this preliminary step, the western powers, by restoring the Greek empire, would have obtained a new and very powerful ally precisely on the point where a new ally would be most useful, and would serve best as a check upon Russia. But would Russia, having concurred with her troops in expelling the Turks, consent to put this bridle upon her own ambition? And if the other powers, in the event of her refusal, attempted to obtain her consent by force, would the battle be fought in Greece or in Germany, and with what success? These questions might have been of great importance had a better union existed among the western states. As the case now stands, the fate of Turkey will be decided by Russia: and the present troubles will probably be the means of extending instead of diminishing her influence; although it may be hoped that they will not be wholly without advantage to the unfortunate countrymen of Miltiades and Epaminondas.

CHAP. IX.

THE BRITISH NAVY.

Next to the Russian army, the navy of England is the most remarkable engine of war now existing in Europe: it is not, however, like the former, of recent growth. England was always a considerable maritime power; and since the decline of Holland, she has reigned without a rival upon the ocean. For a short period during the American war, the union of all the maritime states of Europe and her own colonies endangered her superiority. But in the late long struggles she not only recovered all her former advantages, but carried her naval greatness to a point which it had never reached before, and very probably will never reach again. At present, however, it is not threatened with any immediate danger. The United States exhibited, in the several actions of the late war, at least an equality of naval science in all its branches; but the nature of our political institutions does not permit us to aim at conquest by land or by sea. We have as little ambition to wield the sceptre of the ocean, as willingness to submit to the enormous burdens which it brings upon its possessor. Our permanent naval establishment will never be

pushed beyond a very moderate point; and in the future struggles, which may be forced upon us by the aggressions of other powers upon our commerce, as in the last, we shall always depend principally for actual annoyance of the enemy upon our private armed ships; while the gallantry and skill displayed by our naval officers in single actions will serve, as they did then, to sustain and exalt the national character. It is only in the peaceful pursuits of commerce that we shall ever contest the superiority of England: and as there is no European power from which it appears to be in danger, she will probably remain in undisturbed possession of her watery empire, as long as the foundations of her power remain in other respects unshaken.

The trident of Neptune, says a French poet of the last century, is the sceptre of the world. The power conveyed by it is, however, of a very peculiar kind. A great navy is not, like a great army, immediately dangerous to the liberties of the nation to which it belongs. The only inconvenience they can suffer from it arises from the immense expence required for its maintenance, and for the conduct of the distant expeditions, which it tempts the government that wields it to undertake. It is in like manner not directly dangerous to the liberty and independence of other nations; unless indeed, as has never yet happened, it should exist in connection with a great developement of military power. In general, it makes no attempt upon the

territorial security of foreigners; and, like other sea monsters, makes its prey of such only as voluntarily encounter the dangers of the deep. Hence a great naval power is, upon the whole, much less formidable to other nations than a great military one; which is sure in the end to destroy the independence of every thing weaker within its reach. Still within the limits which the laws of nature assign to its exercise, it is equally liable to abuse, and has indeed within these limits been abused in all ages to a still greater extent. The abuses of military power have at all times and places where there existed any pretension to civilization, been confined, at least ostensibly, to invasions of the national rights and public property of foreigners: and the property and person of the peaceful private citizen have been left unmolested. The abuse of naval power, on the contrary, has always partaken, in a greater or less degree, of a piratical spirit, and has uniformly been exercised upon private property employed in lawful commerce. This remnant of professed piracy has in these latter times been dignified with the title of a rule of law: and while it is reckoned uncivilized, inhuman, and against the law of nations for an army to plunder private property on land, it is perfectly consistent with the same law as well as with the dictates of humanity and the usages of civilized society to plunder private property at sea. Thus, what is wrong upon one element becomes right and lawful upon another. In the wars of barbarous nations there is no distinction between public and private

property. Every thing found in the power of the conquered becomes the property of the conqueror. But it is one of the strangest inconsistencies among the many which disfigure the public law of Europe, that the milder spirit of civilization, which here introduced this distinction in military warfare, should have left in full force at sea the iron maxims of former times.

The determination of the laws and usages of war by land and sea, depends in a great measure on the disposition and character of the dominant powers upon these elements: and the superior inhumanity of the maritime code is consequently not very honourable to England. Ever since the spirit of civilization began to mitigate the ancient horrors of war, England has enjoyed an almost undisputed ascendancy at sea; her influence and practice have of course regulated the laws of naval warfare, and to her must be mainly attributed the cruelties by which it is still disgraced. England has not only continued with unrelenting rigour, up to the present day, the practice of plundering the private property of enemies at sea; but has pushed her pretensions to a most unwarrantable and vexatious extent in regard to the private property of individuals of other nations wholly unconnected with the quarrel. According to the maritime, which, as I have said, is in substance the British code of public law, two governments by going to war, acquire a right of supervision over the lawful commerce of every other people on the globe. The right of plun-

dering the private property of enemies is, according to this system, so sacred and favourable that it may be exercised upon such property even in the hands of third persons; although these persons, confessedly wholly innocent of the quarrel, may suffer very much by the operation. Hence arises the pretended belligerent right of searching the ships of every peaceful nation on the globe, to ascertain whether there is any private property of the enemy aboard of them. These barbarous usages, instead of yielding to the progress of civilization, were pushed during the last war still farther than they had ever been before. Under pretence of prohibiting commerce with the enemy in munitions of war, which had previously been done, England undertook to prohibit the trade in provisions and even medicines; and the nation which sometimes claims the praise of being more civilized than any other, was guilty of attempting to starve the whole innocent population of another country, and give it over to disease, because the two governments were at war. Considered as a deduction from previous existing usages, this claim was perfectly absurd; and I regret that it should have been sanctioned in a formal treaty by the government of the United States. Clothing and every other article of private and domestic use might as justly have been declared contraband; and all neutral commerce with an enemy interdicted at once. Indeed the pretensions of Great Britain did finally arrive at this point; and under pretence of declaring their coasts in a state of block-

ade she actually prohibited for a length of time all neutral commerce with her enemies. The power of doing this, according to her civilians, conferred the right of doing it. It was fortunate that they did not push this argument any further, as it would have justified them just as fully in cutting the throats of neutrals as in seizing their property. Finally, Great Britain claimed the right of examining the crews of all neutral vessels found at sea, and compelling the citizens of every nation in the world to keep themselves constantly prepared to prove they were not British subjects, under penalty of impressment. Such was the code of maritime law introduced by the freest and most enlightened nation in Europe, and at the most enlightened age which the world has yet seen; and it was for resisting these pretensions that the government of the United States was denounced by that of England as partial to France.

For the last and most odious among these claims, such as the right of interdicting all commerce with an enemy, under pretence of a general blockade of his coasts, the right of impressment on board neutral vessels, and the extension of the character of contraband to provisions, little or no pretence of authority was ever adduced, and they were generally supported by the summary argument alluded to above, that power confers right. For some of the others, such as the right of plundering the private property of enemies when found at sea, even in the hands of third persons,

and the consequent right of general search; the right of prohibiting all trade with the enemy in munitions of war; and finally, the most extraordinary pretension of prohibiting to neutrals in time of war all trade with an enemy which they were not allowed to carry on in time of peace; for these pretensions, authorities, more or less satisfactory, were adduced from the laws and usages of the worst periods of European history. Whether the case of England was made out even on grounds like these, is a question which has never been settled, and which is hardly worth inquiry. That barbarous practices should have prevailed in barbarous times, among barbarous nations, is neither improbable nor unnatural; the wonder is, that a civilized nation should consider the existence of them, under such circumstances, as a justification of their continuance in an age of civilization and humanity. By going a little further back, it would be easy to find authorities of still more venerable antiquity in support of still more savage usages, such as killing or enslaving prisoners. If we reject with contempt the ideas of the dark ages on every other point of philosophy, by what fatality is it that we feel ourselves obliged to conform to them, however absurd and cruel, in the law of nations, the largest and most important division of the science of practical morality?

All the reasonings of the British civilians on these subjects are tainted with the enormous error of considering the cause of war as favourable and that of peace as unfavourable; of supposing that the pre-

tensions of belligerents may be liberally construed and followed out into all their consequences, while those of nations at peace, are to be restricted and narrowed down to the bare letter. A large construction in *favour of life* is the humane maxim in Westminster Hall, but at Doctor's Commons the large construction is in *favour of death.* Some of our own politicians even, in the frenzy of party spirit, were found to echo the principle that *the rights of belligerents are paramount to those of neutrals,* as if industry and commerce were the curse and scourge of society, and war the principal instrument of civilization. Hence was derived the justification of what was called the rule of 1756, by which neutrals were prohibited from carrying on any trade with a belligerent nation in time of war which they were not allowed in time of peace. This pretended justification supposes that the right of neutrals to trade with one belligerent power is an unjust encroachment on the right of the other belligerent to annoy his enemy as much as possible; and that, although authorised by usage, it may and ought to be narrowed down to the smallest possible limits; but that the right of annoying the enemy is, on the contrary, a favourable claim, which may be pushed to its fullest extent, and through all its consequences, without regard to the interest even of innocent third persons. By constantly looking at the subject in this point of view, the British civilians became at last so completely blind to its real character, that they seriously argued the cause of war,

as if it were the cause of humanity. One of the most remarkable pamphlets in defence of their pretensions bears the title of "War in disguise, or the frauds of the neutral flags." The natural effort of commerce and industry to escape, by indirect means, from some of the shackles imposed upon them in the most arbitrary and violent manner, was described, as appears even from the title, as not only illegal, but hostile and cruel. The benevolent writer melts into tears at the idea of a blood-thirsty and hard hearted merchant endeavouring to evade the kind regulations established by belligerents, in the common interest of humanity, for the sanguinary purpose of furnishing the comforts and necessaries of life to those who want them. I am far from approving irregularity, as such, in any case, especially when, as in this, it is necessarily accompanied with perjury. But after all, the cause of neutrals, supposing even their proceedings to be in contravention of the arbitrary laws of war, is the cause of humanity and civilization. If trade sometimes puts on a mask, the disguise may be wrong, but it is peace that wears it, and not war. Should industry and commerce obtain in difficult times some slight advantages, even by irregular means, the case, I grant, is hard for the British cruisers, who are thus cheated of their prey; but is there any thing in it at which a professed friend of humanity, like Mr. Stephen, the president of so many Bible and Missionary Societies, the member of so many institutions for suppressing vice in all its shapes, and promoting the public good, need to

take so much offence? The war which neutrals, carried on in disguise in these days of trouble, was the war of civilization with brutal force; and if stratagems are justifiable in all other wars, I see but little reason why this most sacred and necessary of all should be exempt from the indulgence. "War in disguise" was indeed a mode of presenting the subject, more absurd, if possible, than false: but power, it is somewhere observed, is never ridiculous: and the truth of this maxim has, perhaps, on no occasion been more clearly proved than by the fact, that such pretensions and ideas as these were received in any other way than by a general chorus of contempt.

The inconveniences and vexations produced by the pretended belligerent right of search, even when the exercise of it is kept within decent bounds, have always been sensibly felt by neutrals; and they produced, in the time of the American war, the celebrated coalition of the armed neutrality, which was revived again for a short time during the late contest. The leading principles maintained by this coalition were the exemption of the private property of enemies from pillage in the hands of third persons; a very imperfect and inadequate assertion of the rights of humanity, but one to which, unfortunately, the most humane and civilized nation in the world could never be brought to consent; and she being also at that time, and having been ever since, the principal maritime power, the opposite and barbarous construction of public

law is still maintained. It would have been, as is justly observed by a German writer *, a fit object for the attention of the Congress of Vienna, to determine the rights of neutrals, and to establish a code of maritime law on the basis of common humanity. But in this particular the presence and preponderance of Great Britain in the Congress exercised as fatal an influence over the interest of all the other states and the general good, as those of Russia did upon the balance of power and the security of the western nations.

If at any future period a serious attempt should be made by a coalition, or in any other way, to remedy this evil, it would be highly expedient to strike at the root of it, and not to stop at the very unsatisfactory point to which the coalition of the armed neutrality confined its pretensions. Supposing even that the private property of enemies were exempted from pillage, in the hands of neutrals, the pretended right of search would still involve very great and serious inconveniences; and it is not less the dictate of consistency and good sense than of civilization and common humanity to remove the source of these mischiefs, and at the same time introduce a most important improvement in the law of nations, by abolishing wholly the practice of plundering the private property of enemies at sea. The acknowledged basis of the law of nations is the great and universal law of nature; and shall it be endured that this sacred oracle shall be

* Manuscript from South Germany, an anonymous work.

made to say one thing in one place, and another two or three miles off, so it be upon a different element? What says the illustrious Roman orator, in the well known fragment of the Republic, of this very law of nature? "Nec erit alia "lex Romæ, alia Athenis; alia nunc, alia post-"hac, sed et omnes gentes et omni tempore "una lex et sempiterna et immortalis continebit." Such were the lights upon this subject nearly two thousand years ago, of one whom we dignify with the titles of Pagan and Heathen; and with all our christianity and civilization we have now brought the law of nations to such a point of perfection and consistency, that it shall pronounce the same act in the same place to be highway robbery at low tide, and fair war at full sea. While we are going back to antiquity in search of authorities on the law of nature and nations, would it not be as well for the honour of common sense and of humanity to pass over the age of the crusades, when the nameless, I had almost said, shameless, compilations, so often appealed to in maritime courts, were collected, and ascend to the time of Cicero?

All these questions still remain open between Great Britain and the United States; and as the attempts subsequent to the war, to obtain from the former a renunciation of even the most odious of her pretensions have failed, there is every reason to suppose that they will be revived at the next opportunity; and that the United States will be driven to the necessity of taking part in any future war

with the enemies of Great Britain, whoever they may be. The claims of the United States as a neutral power have hitherto been extremely moderate. They acquiesced in the principle that enemy's property on board of neutral ships is good prize, and in the pretended rule of 1756. Their uniform efforts on these points, were not to oppose the British construction of natural law, but rather to ascertain, if possible, what it was, that they might conform to it. Even in this they were never able to succeed: and it happened repeatedly, that after the admiralty courts had settled a principle, and our merchants, in conformity with it, had covered the sea with their property, an order of council proclaimed a directly opposite one, and the wealth thus confided to the faith of England, was swept in a moment from the ocean. It was only the wholly unauthorized practice of impressment on board of neutral ships, and the last unwarrantable pretensions to a right to interdict all commerce with an enemy, under pretence of blockading his coast, that the United States firmly resisted in principle. In the moderate and limited extent of these propositions, this government has, however, consulted the spirit of the British cabinet, and not their own wishes and policy. Their uniform desire, on the contrary, has been to give the greatest possible latitude to neutral rights, and to mitigate by every imaginable means, the horrors of war: and this government even had the glory, by one of its first acts of sovereignty, of giving the world the example of an abolition by treaty of the practice

of plundering the private property of enemies, whether by land or sea. I cannot refuse myself the satisfaction of quoting the article, containing this provision, from the treaty concluded between Prussia and the United States in the year 1785, as well for the purpose of doing honour to the nations that authorised, and the illustrious statesmen who negotiated the treaty, as of giving the sanction of two powerful governments, and of some of the greatest names which the last century can boast, to the sentiments I have ventured to express on this subject. The treaty is signed, on the American side, by Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams, and is, as far as I am informed, the only one ever concluded which contains a provision similar to that below in italics. The twenty-third article is conceived in the following terms:

If war should arise between the two contracting parties, the merchants of either country, then residing in the other, shall be allowed to remain nine months to collect their debts and settle their affairs, and may depart freely, carrying off all their effects without molestation or hindrance; and all women and children, scholars of every faculty (*gens de lettres de toutes les facultés*), cultivators of the earth, artisans, manufacturers, and fishermen, unarmed and inhabiting unfortified towns, villages, or places, and in general all others whose occupations are for the common subsistence and benefit of mankind, shall be allowed to continue their respec-

tive employments, and shall not be molested in their persons; nor shall their houses or goods be burnt or otherwise destroyed, nor their fields wasted by the common force of the enemy into whose power, by the events of war, they may happen to fall; but if any thing is necessary to be taken for the use of such armed force, the same shall be paid for at a reasonable price. *And all merchant and trading vessels employed in exchanging the products of different places, and thereby rendering the necessaries, conveniencies, and comforts of life more easy to be obtained and more general, shall be allowed to pass free and unmolested; and neither of the contracting powers shall grant any commission to any private armed vessels, empowering them to take or destroy such trading vessels, or interrupt such commerce.*

What is the glory of an Alexander or a Napoleon compared with that of having signed such a treaty?

It would be worthy of the governments of two such nations as the United States and Great Britain, to establish a similar provision by treaty between themselves, and thus strike at the root of all their present differences, and fix their relations for ever upon the basis of peace. In so doing they would conform to the humane notions of the present age; and the example of the two greatest maritime powers would serve to settle the principle as a rule of national law. And I take the liberty of asking, who would lose by it? If our commerce suffers more in time of war than that of Great Britain from national ships,

our privateers are in turn more active and successful than her's, and the respective rates of insurance prove, that the loss on both sides is not very unequal. The practice is therefore in substance a war by the two governments upon the commerce of their own citizens and subjects. Is a practice of this sort consistent with the spirit of the times, or of the governments of America and England? And if a proposition were made to the English government, in the name of common humanity and the general good, to abolish it, could they refuse to listen to it and comply with it?

Such considerations, I am aware, has not been heretofore much employed in international negotiations, to the shame of nations be it spoken. But the British government itself has of late given a remarkable example of a different sort, and has urged for a length of time, and with great earnestness, upon other nations, the adoption of an important political measure, the abolition of the slave trade, solely on grounds of common humanity; and, without the prospect of any immediate advantage to either party. This point has been in particular repeatedly and earnestly pressed upon the government of the United States. If, now, the American government should in return press upon that of England the propriety of abolishing the practice of plundering private property at sea in time of war, on the grounds of humanity and consistency, I confess I am unable to see how the British government could object to the use of such arguments, or could reply to them

in any other way than by refuting them, that is, by proving that the practice in question is not injurious to the merchants, and inconsistent with the contrary one of respecting private property on land, a course of reasoning which could not be attempted. Should they take so false a view of their own interest as to suppose that the practice is immediately profitable to Great Britain, it would be easy to reply that the slave trade was also very lucrative to Spain, Portugal, and the other nations, upon which they have urged the abolition of it. But in reality it is obvious, as I have observed before, that the practice of respecting private property at sea would be not only consistent and humane, but highly advantageous to the industrious part of both nations, whose interest must be supposed to be the same with that of the government; and it is on this ground as well as the other that it might be pressed with great force and advantage.

The British government would have the less pretext for refusing to listen to arguments founded on common humanity and the general good, as they have pushed their use of them in this matter of the slave trade beyond the point of discretion, in particular, as regards the United States. It is well known that the United States took the lead of Great Britain in abolishing this traffic, and have shewn ever since, even unto the present day, a still more determined hostility to it in their enactments upon the subject. Their last law goes further than any that has yet been passed in the British parlia-

ment, and makes it piracy to be engaged in the trade. As we have thus uniformly outstripped the British in devising means to check this odious commerce, one would have thought that they would have at least done as much at home as we had, before they began to stimulate us to do more. But without waiting for this, they are constantly and anxiously pressing us, simply on grounds of common humanity, to fresh efforts, notwithstanding that we have already done so much more than they. And the mode in which they have done this has not been less contrary to common international usages than the thing itself. Looking behind our public acts and perceiving or thinking they perceive that these acts are sometimes evaded; (as in the nature of things they must be) the principal object of their endeavours is to urge upon us to put in execution our own laws. Such extraordinary indiscretion would admit of no excuse, were it not for the intrinsic excellence of the cause, which covers and justifies every thing. In order to realise the better the true character of this interference, let us suppose that another nation, as for example the United States, should venture upon it with the British government; should point out to them British laws that are not enforced, and should press upon them for years the necessity of enforcing them, offering at the same time the armed force of the United States to assist in this object, would such application be received by the British cabinet in a friendly spirit? The practice of impressment, for example, as is well known, is in

direct opposition to the whole spirit of British jurisprudence and to various special statutes. Magna Charta declares that no British subject shall be deprived of his liberty, except by the judgment of his peers and the law of the land, which cannot mean an arbitrary order of the government, because the provision was expressly made to prevent such orders. In like manner, the *habeas corpus* act provides, that every man, in any way deprived of his liberty, shall be brought before a magistrate within twenty-four hours, and released if there are no charges against him. As it is no crime to be a seaman, the enforcement of this regulation would defeat the practice of impressment in every instance. Or reasoning from analogy, if a general warrant to search houses has been declared illegal, how much more so must be a general warrant to seize and imprison persons. Of the illegality of the practice there is no doubt.* Suppose then that the go-

* It was highly honourable to the colonial courts in Massachusetts, that they uniformly refused to sanction the practice of impressment within their jurisdiction. A solemn decision to this effect by the highest authorities took place not long before the revolution, of which an account may be found in President Adams's pamphlet, entitled *The inadmissible Principles of the King of England's Proclamation.* There was an earlier case of the same or a similar kind, I think in the time of Queen Anne, which is mentioned in Hutchinson. Not having the book at hand, I am not able to refer to the passage. Considering the supposed difficulty of this subject, these decisions were perhaps a still more noble proof of independence, than the refusal to sanction the relation of slavery previously to the decisions of the English courts to the same effect.

vernment of the United States should urge upon Great Britain, repeatedly and for a series of years, to abolish it in the name of common humanity; and should offer to station a regiment of soldiers on Tower Hill to assist in releasing seaman apprehended by a press gang. Indiscretion, I suspect, would be the mildest name applied to such a proposition. Yet such is the precise character of the interference of Great Britain with the American government in regard to the abolition of the slave trade. Indeed, the American government would really shew much less indiscretion in making such proposals, because the cessation of the practice of impressment at home would remove one of the great points of difference between the two nations. They might say to England with great propriety, "In the name of God and of common humanity, put in force your statutes in favour of personal liberty, and we shall then, at least on this head, have nothing to complain of."

It is not, however, for the purpose of disapprobation that I have pointed out the indiscretion of these proceedings on the part of England. In so good a cause indiscretion itself becomes a virtue; and if, as I love to believe, the British government is moved exclusively by feelings of humanity and compassion for the unhappy Africans, I would exhort them myself to persevere in their efforts, reminding them, however, that it would be more consistent to do, in the first place, at least as much at home as the nation has done which they undertake to sti-

mulate; and reserving to the other nations the right of rejecting propositions, however well meant, that violate the first principles of national independence, as that of employing British ships to enforce the laws of the United States. My object in making these remarks was to shew to what an extraordinary extent Great Britain had carried the practice of urging other nations to the adoption of political measures on grounds of mere humanity; and thus to strengthen the remark that she could not, without inconsistency, refuse to listen to such arguments, when employed in favour of the principle of respecting private property in time of war by sea as well as by land. Let us hope that this provision, which seems to be imperiously demanded by a regard for consistency, if by no higher motive, may become in time a part of the code of nations.

While the contrary practice continues, the abolition of privateering, which has been occasionally suggested by well meaning persons in the United States, would be highly injudicious, and directly unfavourable to the cause of humanity. Privateers are the natural defence of a weaker maritime power against a stronger, and furnish the only possible resource for a commercial nation, which does not choose to load itself with the monstrous burden of a large standing navy. If the general practice of plundering private property by sea were abolished, privateering would of course disappear with it.

CHAP. X.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

In the first chapter of these remarks I have expressed the opinion that civilization, including, as one of its branches, political improvement, is in a progressive state in every part of the Christian world; and, in a subsequent chapter, I have stated that the moral influence of Russia is already extending itself very fast through the neighbouring countries; and that, at no distant period, this power may very probably obtain an actual military dominion over the rest of Europe. As Russia is at present in a very low state of civilization, these opinions may appear at first view contradictory. The military occupation of the west of Europe by an uncivilized power would tend, it may be thought, to check, and perhaps entirely stop, the farther progress of improvement. Hence, if this event is probable, it might appear that civilization is not likely at present to proceed much further. In this concluding chapter, it will be my object to inquire into the probable results of the combined operation

of these two different tendencies upon the political and moral situation of the Christian world.

It may be remarked, in the first place, that these tendencies are not opposite or contradictory in such a sense, as that if the existence of either be supposed, that of the other must of necessity be denied. A community, in a thriving and progressive state, may be threatened from without by a barbarous or less civilized neighbour; but an attack from such a quarter, if it happens and destroys the principle of prosperity, will not thereby shew that it did not exist. In reality, however, the prevalence of the Russian power, should it happen to the full extent I have supposed, does not seem to be attended with any material danger to the progress of civilization, or with any other ill consequences of much importance. It appears, on the contrary, that it will exercise, in concurrence with the progress of civilization, a favourable operation upon the political form of the European commonwealth; and that, as it is the regular tendency of this progress to substitute a consolidated general government, established on rational principles for the present irregular system of international relations, so the extension of the Russian power, without materially counteracting the progress or the effects of civilization in any other respect, will tend materially, by its operation on the existing political forms of the several nations, to expedite their general results.

The present progressive state of civilization in the Christian world will probably be admitted by correct observers as an unquestionable truth. There is, I know, a party in Europe, which maintains precisely the contrary assertion, which continually affirms, that society is on the eve of dissolution, and Europe about to plunge again into a bottomless gulph of general barbarism and anarchy. But this difference of opinion, like most others, will be found, upon examination, to be wholly verbal. The party that holds these ideas, means by *society* the antiquated forms and establishments which have come down from former ages, have already been greatly modified in most parts of Europe, and are disappearing very fast in all. That *society*, taking the word in this sense, is on the eve of dissolution, is so far from being inconsistent with the progress of civilization, that in the opinion of those who believe in this progress, it is one of the proofs and necessary consequences of its reality. And while the party in question express their apprehension of the approach of barbarism and anarchy, they only intimate, in different language, the probability of the same events, which are denominated by others the removal of political abuses, and the introduction of improved forms of government. There is therefore, in reality, no contrariety of opinion in regard to facts; but only an opposition of feeling respecting the character of the same supposed facts, according

as their operation upon the interest of different persons or parties is favourable or unfavourable.

In fact, the present progressive state of civilization is so far from being doubtful, that the most superficial view of the actual condition of the Christian world must satisfy an observer, that it is now in the midst of a most remarkable crisis of social developement, somewhat analogous to that which occurs in the human body at the period of life when it passes from infancy to manhood. The commencement of this crisis may be dated from the revival of intellectual activity in Europe three or four centuries ago, and the discovery of the passage by sea to the East Indies, and of our western world, which were among the first consequences of this revival, and which, in their turn, tended materially to assist and promote it. Since that time, there has been a continual and constantly increasing action and re-action of these two powerful causes. The unceasing movement of intellect in every direction that held out a prospect of advantage, led to the immediate exploration and settlement of the new found countries; and this system of colonization, as it acquired consistency and extension, afforded, in its turn, a strong encouragement to the progress of industry at home. New settlements are necessarily agricultural; and their first and most lucrative commerce is to exchange their superfluous produce for the manufactures of older

countries. It is in a great measure, to the effect of this action and re-action, that we must attribute the remarkable progress of industry, wealth, and knowledge in every part of Europe during the period in question; and we find, accordingly, that the countries which have shewn the greatest activity in the system of colonization, are also those which have shared most largely in their prosperity, as Holland, France, and especially England. Spain and Portugal, it is true, did not derive the same advantages from their vast colonial empire, in consequence of excessive misgovernment at home. The demand from the Spanish colonies for European articles stimulated the industry of every country in Europe, Spain only excepted, which served as a channel to convey the products of the rest of Europe to America, and the treasures of Peru and Mexico to the rest of Europe.

If, however, in general, the advance of civilization in Europe has been owing, in a great measure, to the effects of the system of colonization, we may conclude with assurance, that as long as colonization continues to extend itself, the civilization of Europe and the Christian world will also continue in a proportionally progressive state.

Now, it is obvious enough that colonization, instead of being stationary, or on the decline, has been extending itself within the last fifty years more rapidly than at any preceding period; and is, at this present moment, far more active than it

ever was before. Since the first discovery of the passage to India and the new world, and the consequences that immediately followed, no incident had occurred in the progress of colonization so important as the emancipation of the United States of America; and the re-action of this glorious event upon the prosperity of Europe, has been favourable in proportion to its importance. England, the country that resisted it so obstinately, and consented to it at last with such reluctance, has realized, in the emancipation of her colonies, the mines of wealth for which the first settlers explored them in vain. At the present moment another attempt, parallel in character, but of still more imposing magnitude, is rapidly approaching to a successful termination; and the vast regions of Spanish and Portuguese America must inevitably, in the course of a short period, present the spectacle of eight or ten new-born nations, ready to enter upon a rapid march of prosperity under the auspices of independence. The re-action of this prodigious consummation upon the prosperity and civilization of Europe and America, will be still greater than that of our emancipation, in consequence of the superior amount of population and extent of territory affected by it. In the meantime, colonization, though not advancing by such convulsive bounds as in America, is far from being inactive in Asia and Africa. The British empire in India is extending itself every day, by fair means and foul,

over countries before unknown to Europe even by name; and has lately pushed its advanced posts up to China on one side, and to Persia on the other. The ambition which leads to this extension, and the cruelty which is too often employed to effect it, however fit subjects in themselves for reprobation and abhorrence, are instruments in the hands of Providence for imparting to these countries a higher degree of civilization, and a better condition of society, than they now enjoy. The European settlements at the Cape of Good Hope and on the western coast of Africa, are continually advancing into the interior of that vast continent. Meanwhile, another train of operations, different in its character and immediate objects, but tending essentially to the same results, has also assumed of late an extraordinary activity and development — I mean the effort to propagate the Christian religion by means of Missionary and Bible Societies through the different parts of the heathen world. The new activity of this spirit in an age which is not, in other respects, very remarkable for religious fervour, is quite a singular event, and one which will contribute very considerably to the general progress of civilization. It is true, that the Bible is not a book which can be read with profit by unlettered savages; and the missionaries who go out to explain it to them, are not much better acquainted than their pupils with its true character and spirit. Still their efforts, though marked with

every species of error and delusion, are far from being useless. These burlesque apostles are the pioneers of civilization. They push forward where wiser men have no motive to advance, and where their wisdom would be of little service if they went; for nature, like a skilful general, knows how to turn to account the spade and pick-axe, as well as the sword and pen. These adventurers spread, wherever they go, some rude accounts of the countries from which they come; and when they return, they bring back, in like manner, some imperfect notions of the places they have visited. A communication is thus opened, of which commerce and industry avail themselves for interested purposes. Emigration gradually follows; and by mutual intercourse the social condition of two countries, however dissimilar, is brought up in time to the point of uniformity. These missionaries are now labouring with exemplary zeal in various quarters of the globe. In British India they are extremely active; and of late they are penetrating into the farther Peninsula. They are sowing the seeds of civilization in all the South Sea islands; and if the first crop should be poisonous, instead of nutritive, to the inhabitants, the final result will be a great improvement of their social condition. But though the probable effects of this system, in contributing to the extension of civilization, are not to be denied or overlooked, the main spring of this prodigious movement is still, as I have ob-

served, the spirit of enterprize and industry, which first prompts the European adventurer to discover and explore remote countries, and then sets in motion the machinery of the European workshops to supply his wants, and opens the coffers of Europe to receive his wealth in return.

Europe therefore is the central point of this great universal system of colonization. Europe is the heart, through which the wealth employed in it is continually passing and repassing, as it proceeds from one extremity to another. And it does not pass and repass, without leaving any advantageous traces of its progress, but it is received in one form and elaborated into a new one before it is transmitted; so that industry is stimulated, and wealth and population increased, by the circulation. The wealth and population, thus augmented, tend in their turn to overflow into other countries, which are less thickly settled, and where the means of subsistence are more abundant. From the peculiar circumstances under which the colonising system has grown up, it happened, that this overflow of population spread itself in the first place over very distant parts of the globe, although the regions in the immediate vicinity were also much less thickly peopled and highly civilized than Europe. But as the superiority of Europe over the neighbouring countries, and the activity of the principle of emigration are constantly increasing, a portion of this overflow must, in the nature of things, very

shortly take a nearer direction. This result will be hastened by the fall of the Turkish empire, which must apparently happen very soon, if it is not, as now appears probable, effected by the present concussion. When this barbarous political structure shall have crumbled into atoms, the fine regions spreading from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, which have now for ages been withering under its deadly shadow, will be very soon overrun by the busy sons of Europe; and will return to the high state of prosperity and population, at which they stood from the earliest historical period up to the invasions of the northern barbarians and the Saracens. The light of civilization will then shine again over the west of Asia, and north of Africa; and as the European settlements advance from this quarter into the interior of the latter continent, they will in time communicate with those which are also forming on its southern and western coasts; and the mysterious paths which lead to its centre will be laid open to commerce and philosophy. It were better, perhaps, to wait with patience fort he arrival of this period, than to despatch any more accomplished travellers upon a service, which, in the present state of Africa, is no better than a forlorn hope.

The Persian empire must fall at no very distant period, like Turkey; and this delightful country, which misgovernment has rendered uninhabitable, will become again, as it was in former times, the

garden of the world. When Persia and Turkey shall be occupied by the Europeans, their settlements will then communicate over land with the British empire in India, and an extensive and lucrative commerce will establish itself in this direction by land and sea, and produce the most beneficial effect upon the industry and welfare of Europe. Meanwhile, as the population of the vast regions of Asiatic Russia begins to thicken, and in time to overflow its limits, in search of better climates, it will in like manner spread over Tartary, and communicate on the north with British India, and on the west with China. When the tide of European emigration shall begin to pour in full flood upon this antiquated structure, it may well be doubted, whether it will be able to stand the shock; and it may perhaps be found, that in this quarter also, the first approach of improvement will bring with it the horrors that naturally belong to the last epoch of barbarism. Let us hope, however, that the Celestial Empire may not be destined to share the fate of Peru and Mexico; and that if the Chinese do not prove themselves more courageous and politic than the unfortunate Americans, the Europeans that first approach them may be more humane than the bloody myrmidons of Cortez and Pizarro. The events here contemplated will be far from requiring for their accomplishment so long a lapse of time as may perhaps at first view appear necessary. Consider what has

been done within the last fifty years,—North America emancipated and erected into independent states, South America and Mexico brought to the eve of the same consummation, the whole South of Asia subjected to European dominion, besides innumerable settlements in Africa, in New Holland, and the islands. These are events which required a very different degree of preparation and effort, from the conquest of the barbarous countries in the immediate neighbourhood of Europe; and if these have been accomplished in so short a time, because the natural period in the progress of colonization, at which they might be expected to happen, had arrived; the other, supposing always what appears at present extremely probable, that the period for it is also at hand, will be effected as it were at once. Whenever this period does arrive, be it sooner or later, the whole Mahometan empire, in its various branches from the Indus to the Senegal, will be brought under the dominion of Europe, with a much less effort than that which attended the emancipation of the United States.

Such, then, is the character of the present epoch in the progress of society. The civilization of Christendom, instead of being stationary or on the decline, is pressing forward with a violent effort towards the conquest of the world. The re-action of this progress upon Europe is, as I have repeatedly observed, entirely favourable. Colonization has been the great instrument in bringing Europe to the

point which it has already reached; and will probably in time elevate it to a much higher condition than is now by many thought possible. A late intelligent German writer *, in a treatise expressly intended to examine the probable effect of the system of colonization upon the prosperity of Europe, seems to have adopted a different idea; but his reasoning is far from being satisfactory. He supposes that the emancipation of South America, and the establishment of manufactures in that country, and in the United States, which he regards as a necessary event, will deprive Europe at once of the demand for the products of her industry, and of the consequent supply of specie to pay for them. Industry will then decline in all its branches: money will become more scarce and valuable: and the public burdens, which are already very oppressive, will thereby be rendered intolerable; and national bankruptcies with their consequences, the destruction of existing political forms, and a long period of confusion and general disorder, will probably follow.

Such are the anticipations of this writer in regard to the re-action of the system of colonization upon

* See the work entitled Europe and America, or the future relations of the civilized world, by Dr. Schmidt Phiseldeck, counsellor of state in Denmark; also one of the ministers at the Congress of Vienna in 1814. I observe with pleasure that a translation of this eloquent and philosophical work has been published in the United States.

the state of Europe. But he seems to have overlooked the fact, that the industry of a new people turns itself almost wholly towards agriculture; and that consequently population, and the demand for manufactures in such a society increase much faster than the supply of articles of domestic fabric. Now as the emancipation of a colony has been found, by the example of the United States, to encourage very much the progress of agriculture and population, such an event increases in the same proportion, instead of diminishing, the previous demand upon Europe for manufactures, and the supply of specie and other articles in return. I see no reason to anticipate, that the emancipation of the whole of America will have a less favourable effect upon Europe in general, than that which was produced upon the prosperity of England, by the independence of the United States. This event, instead of depressing the industry of the parent continent, will therefore tend to stimulate it; and instead of aggravating its present financial embarrassments, will afford, if the thing is possible, the means of recovering from them; and should the governments be prudent enough to keep clear of their causes in future, they will be able to establish the prosperity of their countries upon solid and durable foundations. The time will doubtless arrive when manufactures will be established in all parts of America, amply sufficient to supply the wants of the inhabitants, and when they will cease

to come to Europe for any thing, but the products that are peculiar to the soil and climate. But this period is still remote, and will not arrive, till the present financial difficulties of some of the principal powers shall have run their regular course, and produced all their effects upon political forms, and the general condition of society. It will not arrive till the social state of Europe has obtained all the perfection of which it is capable; and a stimulus upon civilization from abroad, has consequently ceased to be of any material advantage. Finally, it will not arrive, until the overflow of the civilization of Europe into the neighbouring countries, which I have mentioned as a necessary event, shall have long since occurred, and a European population shall have spread itself continuously, in various degrees of density, from Ireland to Japan, and from the North Cape to that of Good Hope. At that time Europe will be to the three ancient continents, what New England now is to the United States, the most civilized and populous, the wealthiest and the happiest portion of a civilized and populous, a wealthy and a happy world of kindred origin. If at any period subsequent to this, any other region shall be more populous and prosperous than Europe, the circumstance can only arise from the superior advantages of soil and climate afforded by it. The writer to whom I have alluded, also appears to anticipate with confidence the overflow of European civilization into Asia and

Africa, and even to regard it as a near event. He likewise allows, that it must for a long time produce a favourable re-action upon the state of Europe; but he does not seem to have observed, that this supposition destroys, in a great measure, the basis of his unfavourable anticipations of the effect of the emancipation of America; and he has not given it a sufficiently distinct and important place in his delineation of the probable future.

We may conclude that the industry of Europe will for a long time to come be under the influence of a powerful stimulus from abroad; that its activity will, in consequence, regularly increase; and that this cause will produce a progressive increase of wealth and population, and a regular tendency towards improvement in the social and political condition of the inhabitants. What, then, will be the effect of this progress upon the existing political forms of the several countries, and upon the general European government, which now wears the rude form of a balance of power; and may be considered rather as a future constitution in embryo, than as one in actual existence?

The effect upon the political institutions of the several countries has been already sufficiently examined, having formed one of the principal topics of the preceding pages. It is in general to reform abuses, to correct errors, and to substitute institutions intended to promote the public good, and judiciously adapted to this object, for others that

were originally formed for an entirely different purpose, and are now absolutely injurious, wholly superfluous, or singularly imperfect methods of obtaining desirable results. It is unnecessary to speculate upon the precise form which the governments will wear, when the spirit of improvement shall have had its full operation. It may be observed, however, in general, that its tendency is to introduce institutions essentially republican, or in other words, established on the basis of equal rights. Whether the forms of aristocracy and monarchy, which in such a state of things are the mere shadows of a departed substance, will be retained by the force of habit, or whether hereditary magistracies and distinctions will wholly disappear, is perhaps uncertain. I am rather inclined to think, possibly from the partiality which a republican naturally feels for republican forms, that their simple and manly beauty will be perceived in time by the cultivated classes in Europe; and will obtain a preference over the cumbrous magnificence and childish pageantry of courts. The great economy attending these forms, and their real superiority for the despatch of business, are sufficiently evident; and the example of the United States is annually refuting the vain charge, which European writers have made against them, of tending to create confusion and turbulence. After all that has been said of the stability of monarchies, and the agitation of republics, it appears at last that

the pure democracy of the United States is the firmest and most tranquil government now existing in Christendom.

Assuming, then, that one of the effects of the progress of civilization will be to improve very materially the existing political institutions of the several countries, the farther question remains respecting its influence upon the system of international relations, which is now used as a substitute for a general government. If the same causes may be expected to produce uniformly the same effects, then, in this, as in the other parts of the existing institutions, the tendency of improvement will be to substitute rational methods for arbitrary usages, and to change the present irregular mode of settling the common interests of the several powers, for a regular constitution, founded on the basis of the consolidation of Europe. It would be easy to substantiate in detail the great probability that such an event will occur at some future period, as well by general reasoning, as by the analogy of what has happened in each of the several great states. A thousand years ago the British islands contained within their limits as many independent sovereignties as are now to be found in the whole of Europe, as various in their origin and habits, and speaking as many different languages. Had any body at that time pretended to anticipate the period, when they would all be combined under one consolidated government, patriotism would have taken

the alarm in every separate tribe, and a general chorus of contemptuous denial would have burst from the whole. The progress of civilization, and the increasing intercourse created by it among these different tribes, have gradually broken down the arbitrary geographical and political divisions that separated them; and the union of Ireland, at the commencement of the present century, finally completed the consolidation. The same process has gone on with the same result in France, Spain, Germany, and Russia. Where from accidental circumstances it has not occurred, as in Italy, the loss of national existence has been the consequence. It was necessary that this consolidation should first take place in each separate cluster of neighbouring tribes, before it could begin to exhibit itself on a larger scale among the several great states, which have been the product of its former operations. But we see very clearly in the history of the two or three last centuries, the commencement of the same process between the parts of the general system; and the usage of holding from time to time a general congress of ambassadors, to regulate the political affairs of Europe, is a pregnant indication that something better is gradually maturing.

But the establishment of a general European constitution, whenever it happens, will not be a violent innovation on existing forms, effected by the spontaneous act of the several governments; for these are all jealous of their independence to a

morbid excess. The progress of society will gradually prepare the way for such a change; and make the passage, at one time or another, very short and easy from nominal independence to consolidation. The reformation of the existing institutions will simplify their forms; and remove many of the objections to such a measure, which would present themselves at the present day, on grounds of mere personal vanity. Meanwhile the continual intercourse between the different nations is rapidly effecting a consolidation in substance. The educated classes through the whole of Europe are already fellow citizens. They speak common languages, read the same books, think the same thoughts, have the same social habits, take an interest in the same subjects; and thus form, for all the real objects of life, but one great community. The political parties that exist are no longer subdivisions of single nations, but differences of opinion and interest that pervade them all. The privileged classes form a *caste*, not in this or that kingdom, but throughout Europe; and they stand towards each other in the relation of fellow labourers in the same political cause, a connexion much more intimate than that of mere fellow citizens. The same sympathy exists between the educated but untitled part of the community, which acts as the representation of the people. Thus the very evil of party divisions, though at present it greatly distracts and embitters society,

tends powerfully to promote the final result of a general union. The extent to which the actual amalgamation of the different nations has been carried, and the intercourse which is kept up among them by means of correspondence and travelling, are not less remarkable than their moral sympathies. The thrones and universities of all the north of Europe, are peopled with German princes and professors: a quarter of the population of St. Petersburgh, including almost all the artisans, is from the same excellent nation. French officers or Swiss troops enter in a considerable degree into the composition of all the armies; and the western parts of the continent are covered with small English proprietors, who settle there to avoid the heavy burdens to which they are subject at home. The effect of this positive amalgamation, though considerable, is however far surpassed by that of the close connexion between the different nations, created by travelling and correspondence. The Europe of commerce, of general politics, of letters, and of pleasure, has no knowledge of national divisions. The couriers pass from Constantinople to London, and from Archangel to Cadiz, without heeding any of these imaginary lines of separation. The great commercial houses have branches or connexions in three or four different capitals; and a bankruptcy at Hamburgh or Moscow, is felt upon the exchanges of Naples and Amsterdam, as sensibly as at the point where it occurred. The principal

political concerns are, as I have observed, in common, and the political parties pervade the whole mass, from one extremity to the other. The care of all these common interests, produces a constant personal intercourse by travelling and letters; and all the prominent and considerable part of a contemporary generation, is on terms of personal acquaintance. Frequent intermarriages are the consequence; and as the several reigning houses are really branches from one or two common stocks, so the higher classes of their subjects may be said to form in fact but one great family. Unless, therefore, the principle that the form gradually accommodates itself to the substance, shall prove in this instance to be false, it must be considered as certain that these powers are tending rapidly towards a consolidation.

This consummation, like others that are brought about by the force of circumstances, will be accelerated or retarded, according as the turn of political events, as far as it depends on accident, shall be favourable or unfavourable to it. The prominent feature in the immediate future prospects of Europe, if the anticipations in which I have indulged in a preceding chapter are correct, is the probable prevalence of the influence and arms of Russia over the western nations. It remains, therefore, to inquire what will be the effect of this event, should it happen, upon the state of civilization, and the establishment of a general government.

If the Russian influence in the west of Europe were decidedly unfavourable to the progress of civilization, it would check, in the same degree, the tendency towards a political union resulting from this progress. And as the mass of the Russian people is now in a very uncivilized state, it may appear, at first view, as if this would in fact be the consequence. But further reflection may perhaps lead to a different opinion. The prevalence of the Russian power is not the prevalence of the rude barbarians that constitute the bulk of the nation, but of the dominant class of proprietors, which is equally civilized with the same class in any other part of Europe. Their political influence, as far as it affects the body of society, would be exerted in the same direction, and produce the same consequences, as that of the authorities now existing. It will doubtless be for a considerable period of time to come, the immediate interest of this class in Russia, to check the developement of civilization in one of its particular forms, to wit, that of liberal political institutions. Their whole exertions are now employed for this purpose; and it is under this pretext, as I have observed, that they will gradually extend their political and military power over other countries. But this effort, in reality, counteracts itself; and the persecution of liberal ideas only increases the ardor with which they are embraced and propagated. This temporary pressure will therefore serve to prepare the way, at some

future period, for violent explosions in favour of liberty. Meanwhile the Russian influence counteracts in another way its own efforts in favour of arbitrary principles, by the strong encouragement which is given to the developement of civilization in every other branch except the modification of political forms. The Russian nobles, who are doubtless the wealthiest proprietors in Europe, are also among the most active and munificent patrons of industry. In their private and social habits as individuals, they unite the gorgeous magnificence of Asia, with the fine taste of the western world, and encourage, by consumption of their products, the luxurious and elegant arts more than, perhaps, any other class of persons whatever.

There is something like enchantment in the height of perfection to which this new nation has carried, as it were, in a moment, all the graces and accomplishments of social life; and the aristocracy of Europe no where exhibits itself under so favourable a point of view as in Russia, because it there adds to the refinement which distinguishes the same class in other countries, a lofty magnanimity of character, resulting from the secure possession of unbounded wealth and unlimited power — advantages which the aristocracy elsewhere have either wholly lost, or live in the daily expectation of losing. The Russian nobles speak with finished elegance the most cultivated tongues of the west of Europe; and are familiar with the polite literature of France,

Italy, and Germany. The splendour of their princely palaces, surrounded with parks and lawns in the finest stile of gardening, and furnished with the costliest products of the taste and skill of the west of Europe — their collections of pictures and statuary from the workshops of the most celebrated masters — their large and valuable repositories of books and manuscripts, in all the languages of the world — their stores of wealth in the various departments of natural science — this astonishing exhibition of civilization springing up in the full luxuriant bloom of its highest perfection, from a soil still completely barbarous — this union of fine taste and various accomplishments, with the adventitious lustre of social distinction and boundless fortune — all this strikes very powerfully upon the imagination, and rather seems to realise the brilliant fables of eastern romance, than to resemble the actual condition of any other society that ever existed. The scientific taste of these great proprietors is far from being a matter of parade and charlatanism. The botanical garden of Prince Razumofsky, near Moscow, is probably superior to any other private collection in the world; and we have seen the illustrious chancellor Count Romanzof, fitting out at his own expence, a voyage of discovery round the globe, and giving at the same time a singular proof of toleration, by erecting upon one of his principal estates three churches on the same square, appropriated respectively to the Greek, Catholic,

and Jewish communions, for the use of his tenants and subjects. The attention of these nobles as a body politic, or in other words, that of the government, has also been steadily directed towards the promotion of literature and science, and with the magnanimity naturally resulting from their social position, they exhibited a singular liberality in their political ideas, until occurrences abroad had shewn that this system was too contrary to their own immediate interest.

The influence of such a society over the west of Europe is not, therefore, the inroad of a horde of barbarians under an Attila or an Omar, which sweeps away in its progress every trace of improvement. It is merely a change of power from the hands of one cultivated and civilized government to those of another, and will produce no unfavourable effect upon the general state of society. On the contrary, as its immediate operation would be to increase the intercourse between the other parts of Europe and Russia, it would at once accelerate the progress of improvement in this vast region, and by so doing give an additional stimulus from abroad to the same principle in the west.

The effect of the increasing influence of Russia upon the political forms of the western nations, must be considered as decidedly favourable, precisely, because it tends to subvert their form, and to sap the independence of the several states. The

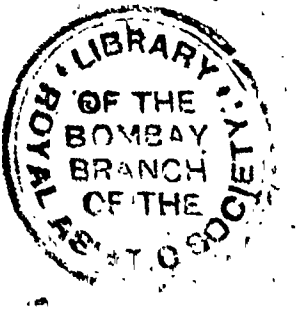
existence of established institutions founded on the basis of independence, and consecrated by ancient and immemorial usage, would always be a great obstacle in the way of consolidation. Hence the occurrence of a course of events, which tends directly to break down this obstacle, even though it be in other respects adverse to the general good, would prove in the end an important benefit; and this is the operation of the prevalence of a great military power over the rest of Europe. Even where the independence of other nations is nominally preserved, the attachment to the name must be much diminished, when it has been proved by repeated experiments that the reality is wanting. Austria is now as independent in name as before the French revolution; but the value of this nominal attribute is doubtless greatly lessened in the opinion of the nation by the recollection that it has not secured them from two or three successive occupations by the French armies, and will afford them no safeguard from a similar occupation by those of Russia at any future day. France is also independent in name; but after seeing the tents of the Cossacks pitched in the Elysian fields twice in two successive years; after seeing hosts of foreigners repeatedly enter and evacuate the country without consulting the inhabitants; every intelligent Frenchman must feel that this pretended independence is a mere form without any corresponding substance. Thus the ascendancy of a great military power,

even to the extent to which we have seen it repeatedly carried of late, tends very sensibly to impair the attachment to the form of independence, and to smooth the way towards a general government. If Russia, in the progress of events, should carry her ascendancy so much further than the preceding dominant powers, as to abolish the forms of independence, as well as to demonstrate their emptiness, and unite the whole under her own sceptre, this result would be itself the desired consolidation. Its form would be in the first instance objectionable; and it would be a far more agreeable way of arriving at the same point, to substitute by common consent, a regular general government for the existing system. But this being in the nature of things a very improbable event, the consolidation, whenever it happens, will probably be assisted by some such accident; and the temporary ascendancy of a military government may perhaps be looked upon as a necessary step in this progress. The division of the several states and their nominal independence being thus abolished, the advance of civilization would immediately begin to exercise the same influence upon the new general government, that it now does upon each of the separate ones; and the final result in this case as in the other, would be the organization of a universal European commonwealth, on rational and liberal principles. Thus the ambition and fanaticism of the Russian government, like most other moral and physical evils,

while it produces great immediate mischief and suffering, may tend materially towards the promotion of a very important object connected with the general good.

But it would be both presumptuous and unprofitable to indulge in any further conjectures respecting future occurrences, which, however probable, are doubtless contingent and uncertain. While we hope, that the final political union of all parts of Europe, under a liberal government, may be effected in the happiest possible way, and while we are obliged to regret that this event still appears distant and doubtful, we may console ourselves, as citizens of the United States, with the reflection, that this great blessing was the birth-right of our favoured country; and that imagination cannot anticipate, or any accident, however happy, procure for our brethren in Europe, any other or greater political advantages than those of which we are already in actual possession.

THE END.



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